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United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club

1905-2005

A Century in Hagley Park



**Edited by
Peter J Oakes**

**United Bowling, Tennis
and Croquet Club
1905-2005**

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Front cover: Painting by Edna Bruce. See Illustrations page 128
Back cover: Photograph of United pavilion before the fire. See
page 49 and Illustrations page 128

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Naylor

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Preface

The first meeting of what came to be called the Joint Centenary Committee was held on 7 September 2002, in the United Croquet Club pavilion following a letter from that club suggesting a united celebration. It is simply impossible to count the number of committee, sub-committee and other meetings that were held in the run up to the final celebration, but it must have reached many dozens. All three clubs are grateful to, and thank, all those who took part; for their skills, enthusiasms and labours.

Early on it was recognized that the preparation of this book was among the more important tasks of the JCC. It was agreed both that while each club should be responsible for writing its own 'sporting' history, the writing of the clubs' common history before 'the fire' was probably best undertaken by one person. As the book came together there would need to be one 'executive editor' to ensure consistent style. I was honoured to be entrusted with the first of these jobs, and Peter Oakes undertook the second.

Thanks are also due to the staff of Archives New Zealand and of the Christchurch City Library for their unfailing helpfulness; to Anne Dobbs of the Information Office in the Botanical Gardens, the staff at the Canterbury Museum and to Karyn Toulson, Leonie Thompson and Anne Greenings of the Christchurch City Council. They displayed unfailing patience and helpfulness in the face of our unusual and detailed enquiries. Mr Les Bruce kindly loaned his copy of the 1903 Cyclopedia of New Zealand which provided many fascinating glimpses into the social fabric of that time. Our thanks are also due to Warwick Scadden of the City Council for his insights into the management of Hagley Park and of the attempt by the High School Old Boys rugby Club to take over the bowling greens and croquet lawns in 1994.

Finally, although the United Club itself was formed in 1905, each sport was organised as a club prior to that date and later obtained formal Incorporation on different dates : Bowls on 5 Dec 1951; Croquet on 19 Oct 1959; and Tennis on 13 Sept 1973.

Geoffrey Naylor
Chairman JCC

Foreward

People's journeys through life are made rather more difficult if they do not know where they came from. It is now well over 100 years since our sporting heritages began in Hagley Park, cemented by the establishment of a single club for three distinct sports, bowls, croquet and tennis, united by the common objective of enjoyment. Though there have been many changes, developments, improvements, crises, joyous moments and great achievements, the essence of our clubs has prevailed in the magnificent park setting, Greens and bowls, lawns and mallets, courts racquets and we still have our great games,

How fitting it has been in recent years for bowls to host top national tournaments; tennis the New Zealand Grass Court Championships almost 100 years after the club hosted the original combined Australasian and New Zealand Tennis Championship; and croquet the international MacRobertson Shield championships in 2000.

Our journey has been at times difficult if not impossible. In some years there appeared to be no 'light at the end of the tunnel', but we have prevailed. The memberships of our clubs today have the same principles as those of old, providing facilities and fostering and promoting the game, while offering social activities and competition to suit the individual.

This 100 year jubilee has not come about by the efforts of the present clubs' personnel alone; it is a mark in time representing the efforts of many folk who have either passed away or who are no longer active within their clubs. We carry their torch.

This publication and our continuing clubs are a tribute to these people. Their joy, their despair, their stories and their clubs.

Bruce P Day
President, Tennis

Daphne Pickett
President, Bowls

Geoffrey Naylor
President, Croquet

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PART ONE

1. CHRISTCHURCH'S EARLY YEARS

The Garden City In the Making

The small nascent city that was to become the home of the United Club was a very different place from the one we know today. Certainly not yet a garden city, Christchurch was however the largest settlement in Canterbury Province and the province itself had grown at remarkable speed. From a population of around 4,000 in the mid-1850s it reached 145,000 by the turn of that century. Of course immigration was the major contributing factor and no doubt these new citizens brought their games and their sporting instincts with them. Those who settled in or near Christchurch must have been delighted at the foresight of their predecessors who had retained Hagley Park as open space, administered by the Canterbury Public Domains Board. The name of the park derives from the country seat of Lord Lyttelton in Worcestershire, in the English Midlands near the Welsh border. Lord Lyttelton was one of the founder members of the Canterbury Association when it was set up in England in 1847.

The exact origins of the park are somewhat uncertain. Ian McBride (1) states that "One of the stories about the origins of Hagley Park is that Robert Godley insisted upon it as a means of isolating the contaminating influence of the Scottish Presbyterian Deans brothers from his 'pure' Anglican settlement of Christchurch." However he prefers the view that it was the Deans brothers who were the initiators and gave the land to Christchurch, again, "as a buffer". But this view is disputed by Anthony Brown (2) who argues that "Only the Maori owners of the land, and not their tenants, had the right to bestow their land on the Canterbury Association."

Whatever actually happened, it was quite a sizable isolation.(3) Hagley Park was 445 acres and the Domain [the area basically the present day Botanic Gardens] was 64 acres [180 and 29 hectares respectively]. It may be surmised that the early settlers originally set aside a considerable acreage as reserves for the future, and presumably controlled, development of Christchurch, because wrote Miss J P Morrison (4), "The expectations of the [Canterbury] Association as to the value of the civic reserves were not fulfilled, as they were all sold to private purchasers by 1858. But Christchurch has cause to be grateful for the great domain of Hagley Park".

Nevertheless in 1859 a Mr John Olliver (5) "Introduced a Bill in the Provincial Council to take five acres of Hagley Park for the site of a public hospital." Since the location alongside the river with its damp and misty atmosphere was thought by some to be most inappropriate as the site of a hospital to treat respiratory diseases, the bill was fiercely opposed. Nevertheless it was passed, albeit by a single vote.

Every present day citizen of the city, and particularly every member of the United clubs, would agree with Miss Morrison on the importance of the park to their own well being. Such a judgement is amply sustained by the number of sporting activities held in it, not to mention the vast numbers of people who stroll or run through it. Miss Morrison goes on to say (6) that around 1867 the "Provincial Council was undertaking the task of draining Hagley Park" and later (7) implies Hagley Park was a healthy lung in an unhealthy city - unhealthy, one may suppose, because the city in those days was a dusty or muddy sort of place depending entirely on the weather of the day.

Domain Boards were the forerunners of local government in New Zealand. Some exist still today. The name stems from the same Latin root as dominion, so is thus most appropriate for New Zealand, although its use can be traced back to the start of the 17th century.

Its meaning, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is 'estate or territory held in possession' and was once described as land destined to "fall to the next heire in succession." Boards were set up to cover a variety of purposes and a variety of properties; there was a Riccarton Road Board, which indeed sent a member to the Christchurch Domains Board the successor to the Canterbury Public Domains Board.

This Board was an important instrument in the management of the early city and its environs. It had its origins in a commission which in 1864 was considering how best to implement the wishes of the Acclimatisation Committee, nowadays transformed into the Fish and Game Council, with regard to establishing trees, bushes and other plants in the Domain. In this they were able to call on advice from Mr Barker, the Government Gardener, and as well as doing the planting they also resolved "to fence off the grounds with V D L palings at once".

In an aside, it is interesting that Mr. Barker wrote in one of his reports that there was a difficulty in getting young trees established near Bealey Avenue and Fitzgerald Avenue as they were being destroyed, broken or eaten, by calves which had been tethered to them within the park boundary by nearby residents.

According to later Domain Board minutes, Riccarton Road was in a sorry state and cyclists frequently used the footpaths, as well as the paths through the Park. Indeed one board member complained of speeding cyclists in the park in the dark. They were, he explained, policemen who certainly should have known better. The board promptly resolved that in future all cyclists must have lights.

The dress codes of public gentlemen of the period, as shown in A Picture Book of Old Canterbury [Ken Coates 1985] were quite formal. From photographs of the worthy members of the Domain Board and of other men around this time, moustaches and beards were de rigueur, as were their high collared white shirts. However

cricketers appear to have been dressed much as today, in whites and open-necked shirts. But while they may have been relaxed and happy playing in the park, they were not immune from criticism. The minutes of the Canterbury Domains Board meeting in April 1867 cautions that permission for the cricket clubs to use the boat to cross the river would be withdrawn if the members, "did not keep to the proper paths in passing through the grounds." While our interest in the Board's proceedings is limited to their involvement in the development of United, their powers were very much wider. Early records reveal, as indeed do the modern records of their direct descendent, the Christchurch City Council, their concern for and involvement in just about everything that affected the lives of citizens.

From time to time proclamations were issued by the Governor, and by local superintendents on his behalf, and every change in the membership of the CDB was promulgated in this way. An example is one that was issued by the Superintendent of the Province of Canterbury, William Rolleston, dated 16th January 1873. But due to the resignations of some of its members a new proclamation on 3rd November 1874 named its four members as: Richard James Strachan-Harman, Esq., Hugh Percy Murray-Aynsley, Esq., Edward Jollie, Esq. (Provincial Secretary), The Hon Edward William Stafford. By the time the Canterbury Public Domains Board was superseded by the Christchurch Domains Board on 24th October 1882 its membership had grown to nine.

Pasted into the first volume of the new Board's minute books is an extract from The Lyttelton Times of 25th September 1900 reporting that rentals "last season" from football, golf, hockey, cricketers and polo totalled £58 while the sheep [from grazing rights] yielded revenue of over £360. Sheep continued to graze in the park until well after the Second World War. (At times students from Canterbury University would drive sheep from the park and corral them inside the quadrangle.) The Lyttelton Times report went on to say "In former years archery was allowed, but is now considered

too dangerous a pastime to be taken part in public gardens, and as for croquet, it is held that the lawns that are laid out should belong to the public as a whole and not to any section of it". It hardly needs saying that the present day croquet club - in 2005 - would welcome more members of the public using their lawns, after becoming members of the club, of course.

From the nine members in October 1888, further personnel changes, which came along at fairly frequent intervals, and which were made public by further proclamations, created new boards. The first meeting of one such newly-created Christchurch Domains Board [page 317 of Vol. 1] was held on 13th February 1905. Once again, every one of its (now) thirteen members were all appointees - no direct elections then. They are listed in the Appendix.

All but William McMillan (who was "granted leave of absence") are recorded as actually attending the first meeting of the new board together with C M Gray and W Dunlop who were respectively the Mayor of Christchurch and the Chairman of the Selwyn District Council. H P Murray-Aynsley was again elected chairman - though he signed at least one set of minutes as 'Chair', foreshadowing the fashion towards the end of the century. This then was the board that was directly concerned with the establishment of the United Club at its meeting on 10th April 1905. Fortunately the secretary kept meticulous minutes of their meetings and these have been a most valuable source of information about the background to the formation of our Club, as will be seen later. The board met at irregular intervals, and it was not uncommon for there to be no quorum so that business was held over to the next meeting and sometimes for more than one meeting.

In Miss Morrison's *The Evolution of a City* a contrast is drawn between outer and inner Christchurch (8). "New Brighton, at the time, was a little known waste where bittern and wild pig might be seen." In a part of Hagley Park the plans for a public garden were

carried out by J F Armstrong who was curator from 1867 until 1879. With the help of his son he laid out the greater part of the Botanic Gardens. The many nurseries established in and around Christchurch by the 1870s were responsible for much of the planting of outer areas that were once mere tussock or bog-land. Already the seeds were being sown - if you will forgive the clumsy allusion - to the claim of the present day Christchurch to be 'The Garden City'. The fencing and setting out of the grounds with trees and other plants were regular topics urged on the board by the Canterbury Association and were an annual item on the board's agenda, as were the grazing rights in the park and the domain for sheep, which the cricketers had permission to ask to be "moved when requested".

But we are getting ahead too fast. There is clear indication that there was organized sport in Hagley Park very soon after the settlers arrived. In December 1867, as we have seen, the minutes of the Canterbury Public Domains Board recorded that members of the cricket clubs were warned about their use "of the boat to cross the river", and the antecedents of one of the United sports clubs in Christchurch can be traced back at least to the 1870s. For example there is a reference to the already established Archery & Croquet Clubs in the January 1873 Minutes of the Canterbury Board.

The Christchurch Bowling Club (9) was founded in November 1875 and its counterpart the Canterbury Bowling Club eight years later, in 1883. The Canterbury Lawn Tennis Club was started in 1882, a date which perhaps shows the good communication with 'the Old Country', for lawn tennis was only just taking over from croquet as the most popular lawn-based sport in England. (Indeed it was only in 1877 that the Wimbledon-based All England Croquet Club, faced with stiffening competition from the growth of tennis, changed its name to The All England Croquet and Tennis Club. It is not widely known that croquet is still played at the club, although only one lawn now remains.)

Further evidence of the importance of the board, aside from the very many activities it monitored and on which it passed judgments, can be seen in a minute of its meeting on 4th April 1913. It records the names of no fewer than twenty-three applicants for the vacant position of secretary.

An early reference to the United Club - or at least to its grounds appears in Ian McBride's book *Riccarton. The Founding Borough*. Reminiscing about selected families (10) he makes the following comment: "The Weir family were important. Matthew Weir bought the Benmore Station but sold it in 1884 due to ill-health and moved to Riccarton. He secured the grazing rights to both the north and south Hagley Park, which on his death in 1889 passed to his brother James. After taking over the park grazing, James Weir lived in a caravan on the site of the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Courts." Strictly speaking, since United was not then established perhaps it ought to read "on the site of the future United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Clubs".

We have already referred to the importance of the park because of its sporting facilities, a view reinforced by Henry Wigram (11), who in 1916 wrote that "Hagley Park, north and south, has been the sports ground of successive generations of Canterbury boys, and stands in the same relation to some of those who have since fought in South Africa, in Egypt and on the Gallipoli Peninsular, as did the playing fields of Eton to many who fought at Waterloo. In its ample spaces the Park provides grounds for cricket, football, polo, golf, hockey, lawn tennis, bowls, croquet and model yacht sailing". Petanque, or boules, came much later.

Following an earlier exhibition a quarter of a century before, there was a major Industrial Exhibition in the Park in 1906-7, in the early days of the United Club. Quite remarkably, with a country-wide population of just under 910,000, the exhibition recorded an attendance of some two million people - but no record could be

found of any recruiting drive by any of the United clubs despite the fact that the Exhibition Committee sought, and obtained, the board's permission to include the clubs' lawns within the exhibition area.

As we shall see later, having been 'born' in the first decade of the century, the United Club went on to become established as the leading multi-purpose sports club in Christchurch, if not the whole of the South Island. Certainly its constituent clubs played a full part in the development of their sports in New Zealand.

2. UNITED'S RISE AT PILGRIMS' CORNER

A Pretty Feature of the Park

The first reference to any of the United clubs to be found in the minutes of the Domain Board was, as has already been noted, in 1873. The second, just a couple of years later, was at a special meeting of the board which was held *inter alia* "To consider proposal from Archery & Croquet Clubs Chch & neighbourhood to be allowed the use of a piece of ground within the domain gardens for the purpose of practicing and playing matches on. The board decided it would grant the application on condition that the clubs incurred the expense of preparing the ground and all other expenses necessary for their use of the same". The board offered a piece of land "to the rear of the Museum". (1)

It was to be more than thirty years before the board again considered the granting of grounds to any of the clubs and then it was for all three, Bowls, Croquet and Tennis, on 10th April 1905. This is perhaps the first date which might be regarded, if not as the three clubs' birth date, then at least close to the date on which the United concept was conceived. The minutes record that a deputation consisting of Messrs W Jacques (President of the Bowling Club), J Brown & W Thompson "waiting upon the Board in reference to the allocation of a piece of ground near the Ranger's cottage in the south park 'about lease' as a Bowling, Tennis & Croquet court. Mr Jacques pointed out the piece of ground they wanted was not much used by the public and the promoters would be prepared to beautify the spot if their request was granted. They would fence it with wire netting and creepers & erect a pavilion that would be a very pretty feature of the park." (2) The decision on this request was referred to a subcommittee with power to act after inspecting the ground.

It seems that the subcommittee acted with some alacrity, but to no avail since at a further board meeting only nineteen days later "The Chairman reported that the subcommittee appointed to arrange for the Bowling green etc in the south park had adjourned the business as the promoters wished to submit a different proposition to the Board. Letter recd from Mr E J Ross intimating that a deputation would wait upon the Board submitting an application signed by Mr Jacques himself for the use of 3 1/2 acres in the north park." (3) Mr. E J Ross was also a bowler and the father of Mr A G F Ross a leading croquet player after the First World War.

Again with even more commendable speed (at the same meeting no less), but faced now with a seven-man invasion, the board noted: "A deputation consisting of Messrs Jacques, Ross, Goss, Brown, Thompson, Fisher and Laurie waited upon the Board in reference to a Bowling, Tennis & Croquet ground in the north park. Mr Jacques explained that since they waited upon the board they had met with so much success in obtaining members for the proposed club that the extent of the grounds asked for would be far too small. They would like about 3 1/2 acres in the north park bounded by the plane avenue Riccarton Road and the Wellingtonias. Mr Ross explained they could not hope to get support from tennis players unless they had a site which was sheltered from the east wind." Promptly enough the board resolved to set up a another committee to deal with this request, with the chairman as an ex officio member "and to meet on the ground at 2.15 pm on Tuesday 9th inst" (4) The Wellingtonias still exist as the row of trees between the tennis courts and the car park.

Things moved ahead rapidly. Just over one month later, on 12th June 1905, the board minutes stated: "The subcommittee appointed to deal with the Bowling, Tennis & Croquet club's application for ground in the north park reported that they had granted the club the use of 3a; 3r: 27.2p. The subcommittee report was adopted." (5) A book by A Brown, (6) referring to the Board's decision, states "United

Bowls, Tennis and Croquet leased an area of 3 acres 3 roods 27 perches which they had expanded to nearly 6 acres by 1919". This is the first reference discovered of the use of the term 'United' to describe the three sports clubs as a whole, and so 12th June 1905 probably has a claim to be our Christening some weeks after our birth date.

So with an area of the North Park as a home, the United Club was on its way. At a total cost of £99.16.0, two croquet, two bowls and six tennis lawns were laid out. Later a pavilion was built for the use of all three sections of the club.

But first the Domain Board had some more decisions to make - how much rent should be charged and under what conditions the club should be allowed to operate. At the same 12th June 1905 meeting another sub-committee was established with these Terms of Reference: "To draw up conditions on which the ground should be let to the club." It was proposed "That the annual rental be 30/- per acre say on 8 acres the same as the cricket clubs pay", that is a total of £24. But a board member, a Mr Dunlop, moved an amendment that the rental be £30. The minutes record that "The voting was equal 4 on each side. The Chairman gave his casting vote in favour of the amendment which he declared carried." It may be noted that the eight acres was more than twice the area approved by the board. The minutes continue: "A letter was read from Mr Ross asking the Boards permission to erect a temporary building on the grounds for the accommodation of the men while the work is in progress & application granted."

So by the middle of June 1905 the United Club had grounds and permission to erect a building. But, we may surmise, the emerging club committee was beginning to appreciate the cost of fulfilling their promise of the previous April that, if granted an area in which to play, "They would fence it with wire netting and creepers & erect a pavilion that would be a very pretty feature of the park", because

just a few days later they were back at a board meeting "called at the request of the Bowling, Tennis & Croquet club in reference to the rental to be charged for the ground allocated to the club in the north park. Letter dated 14th inst from the secretary of the club asking the Board to reconsider the rental of £30 as already passed which the club viewed as excessive", (7) Perhaps they had also worked out that the area was more than double. However, note the minutes, so few members were present that the decision was delayed until the next meeting.

Some success was achieved at this next meeting, which took place on 14th August, when Mr Staples (obviously a friend of our sports) moved that the "resolution fixing the rent of the Bowling, Tennis & Croquet clubs annual rental at £30 be rescinded". This was carried by four votes to three. Then, "The rental to be charged to the aforementioned club was fixed at £20 for one year" was agreed to by the board on a motion by Mr Dunlop who obviously had had second thoughts about just what an appropriate rent would be. (8)

But the paper work was not over yet. The matter of the conditions attaching to the lease was still outstanding, at least for another couple of months, and as we shall see later the new club had another matter on which the board's permission was to be sought. On 9th October 1905 the fruit of the resolution of the previous June appears in the minutes: "A letter was read from Mr Geo Harper enclosing draft copy of lease to the Bowling & Tennis club [Note the omission of Croquet] which was approved and ordered to be sent forward to Wellington for the Governor's signature". (9) The Governor at the time was Lord Plunket.

Then the other matter came before the November Board meeting when "A letter was read from the United Bowling & Tennis club asking the Board consent to their laying down gas and water pipes to the grounds in the north park. The matter was referred to the Executive with power to act." It seems reasonable to conjecture that

when this was reported in the newspapers it triggered a feeling of guilt in the cricket club for they were moved to ask, at the very next board meeting, for retrospective approval for the gas and water pipes they had already laid.(10)

On 9th, December, 1905 the Mayor of Christchurch, Mr C M Gray, according to a newspaper report, "let his mind wander back to the good old days of fifty years or more ago, and briefly referred to the pioneers who were then young and strong and strenuous." He was opening the pavilion of the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club. The report had Mr Gray "in opening the splendid grounds ..." say "Just where the pavilion stands, the pilgrims of fifty-five years ago ... had made their camping ground ..."

Exactly when the first pavilion as opposed to the building "erected for the accommodation of the men while the work is in progress" was built is not known precisely. However, it was very early in the club's development, because the annual report of 1906-07 refers to it and the New Zealand Bowlers' Annual carried a photograph of it as an advertisement of 'The Famous Marseilles Roofing Tiles' and asserted that they were 'specially suited for bowling pavilions'. Then, under photographs of the senior officials, the annual report told readers of the Bowlers' Annual in which it was carried that "A row of pines shelters the pavilion and ground from the east wind..." and two or three of these can be seen clearly in the photograph. The report described the pavilion as "a handsome building. On the ground floor are tea rooms, ladies' dressing rooms, dressing rooms for the bowlers and tennis players, bath rooms etc. A handsome balcony gives the front of this building an imposing appearance." Again, no mention of croquet, except that the report does tell of "two croquet greens. But it is proposed to use part of the bowling greens ... when the two extra (bowling greens) are ready...."

Thus by July 1906 the United Club was a fully recognized part of the sporting scene in Hagley Park, for the Domain Board minuted in

that month that "The board considered that no new path along the river bank was necessary for access to the club grounds", without the need to refer to the actual sports being played.

As we have seen, around that time the citizens of Christchurch were becoming involved in a major exhibition project. Hagley Park was to be the venue and in August 1906 "The Exhibition Commission wrote asking the Board's consent to the 5 acres 3 roods 36 perches used by the Bowling & Tennis Club to be included in the Exhibition area to enable a small charge to be made at the Tennis Tournament to be held during the Exhibition season." It was resolved to grant permission except for a triangular corner, "to avoid interfering with walking in the Park". (11)

With the old measures of 4 roods to an acre and 40 perches to one rood, this whole area covered almost 6 acres, well up from the original 3 and-a-half acres - clear evidence of the vigorous growth of the early United Club. Further growth can be inferred from the letter received by the Board from "Mr S W Jameson, Secretary, United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club, Hagley Park, dated 6th May 1913, applying for a further two acres of ground on the south side of the Club's Enclosure". (12)

This letter caused the board some extra work, for its minutes of the meeting held on that day record "Following up on the letter of Mr Jameson dated 6th May a deputation consisting of Messrs William Goss, (President), R D Harman, and P A Laurie waited on the Board with reference to the application from the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club for further ground, and they having retired, it was resolved that consideration of the request be held over until the next meeting of the Board. It was further resolved that, in the meantime, the Board meet on the grounds of the Club on Saturday 24th May at 2.15 for the inspection of the area proposed be rented by the United Club". (13)

This they did and noted on the 24th May 1913 that "The Board

proceeded to inspect the area proposed be rented by the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club as an extension of their present grounds". Clearly the board members approved of what they saw, for they not only agreed to the club's request but also offered some extra ground. On 1st July 1913 the minutes record that "The matter of the Secretary of the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club was received and it was resolved to grant their application for a further two acres of ground for grass courts only, as per the report of the Special Committee re Sports Grounds. It was further resolved to inform the United Club that the board would grant permission for asphalt courts on the ground adjoining that now occupied by the Canterbury College tennis courts if desired."

Asphalt courts must have had some appeal, for around this time the tennis and croquet lawns were being cut by a horse-drawn lawn mower. The horse had to have special dinner plate-sized shoes fitted so as not to damage the lawns and it seems likely that this was the method employed for several years. Recalls Brian Stedman, who is still an active tennis player and was for many years a leading member of the Tennis Section and of the whole United Club "One of the present day lawn mowers used is at least 40 years old, and I can remember riding on the back of the horse when I was a young boy." Brian still has in his garage the swingletree which connected the horse to the mower. The switch from horse power to petrol was initiated by the Bowls Section in the late twenties.

The First World War inevitably led to some curtailment of activities both at the club and in its dealings with the civic authorities. But immediately after the war there is reference to a supply of electricity to the club and in the mid-twenties to the lighting of nearby streets and footpaths, as well as to the training grounds.

As the three sports increased their numbers it became necessary to develop the pavilion further, for later a first floor was added at the balcony level and the three sections informally had their own spaces

upstairs - bowls and croquet overlooking their lawns and tennis at the other end. Again, so many of the early records have disappeared, exact dating is impossible. Fortunately, the earliest remaining annual report, dated 30th June 1925, mentions work on the pavilion. "In connection with the alterations to the Pavilion, the club is much indebted to Mr Wm. Goss. He prepared plans and specifications and generally supervised the work through the building operations, thus saving Architects' fees, and and Clerk of Works' wages. Every member will realize that Mr Goss thus saved the club. The Pavilion in every way is satisfactory. It affords ample space for the afternoon tea, the servery accommodation is most convenient, and the increased number of lockers is much appreciated by members". Bridge was played in the upstairs area and was popular, not only with club members, but their friends too. For major sporting events, such as national or international tournaments, the whole pavilion would be used by whichever section was running the event.

The thirties seem to have been fairly unexceptional although there were some developments regarding the supply of water, to the bowling greens in particular. The water for all the grounds was pumped up from the river, filtered and used to prepare the lawns. Water for drinking was obtained from a separate source - a well beneath the present car park adjacent to the Bowls and Croquet clubrooms.

During the Second World War the Land Army had made use of the greens and lawns, and immediately after the war the reinstatement of the club grounds was the priority. The Christchurch Domain Board's responsibilities for Hagley Park were taken over in 1946 by the Christchurch City Council, and with the new spirit that the end of the war had brought, it was not long before an extra bowling green was established and permission sought from the City Council to erect "a sun pavilion" at the Croquet Club's green. Although the requisite permission was given on 13th April 1949 no work was ever carried out. Records the minutes of a city council meeting on

22nd January 1951: "It had not been proceeded with due to a misunderstanding on the part of the donor". Just who that donor was is unfortunately not noted. About this time the council was also asked to allow ladies to play croquet on Sundays, and approval was given, in the report of the Abattoir and Reserves Committee no less, to the 3,014th meeting of the Christchurch City Council on 14th March 1949. Under the heading, 'Sunday Play, Ladies Croquet, United Club' the minutes record that "The Committee has granted permission for Sunday Play from 2 pm to 5 pm"

In the 1950s there are minutes that refer to the club seeking a reduced rental despite the fact that work had been done on the paths to the club, and the road alongside had been regraded and sealed. The club was apparently in arrears with its rent and a deputation went to the city council to discuss this issue. For example on 12th February 1951 the council reduced the club's debt to £300, but unfortunately the minutes do not state what they were reduced from. But it must have been a recurring theme, because there is more than one reference in the minutes to the problem. Another such visit by a deputation was on 24th May 1954, but their request for a lower rental was refused. The director stated that the club paid £16 per acre per annum, a rate that had been unchanged for 25 years. Moreover, he continued, the United Club has an area of 8 acres but instead of paying £128 a year paid only £110, "which is less than similar clubs".

The various reports from the club's executive to the Annual General Meetings (15) reveal many fascinating glimpses of the middle years, sometimes confusingly. For example, at the AGM on 30th June 1931 the minutes record that Mr William Goss had resigned from the Executive Committee having been a founder member thirty-three years before and continuously since then. He is applauded for his long service which included "three terms as president." But at the AGM just six years later, reporting sadly on the death of Mr E. J. Ross, the minutes state that he also was a founder member and had also been on the Executive Committee since its inception, and was

described as being the only person to have served three terms as president.

Membership reported to the 1931 AGM was 538, while in 1937 it was 447. In 1939 there were 438, of which 297 were Tennis Section members, 75 from the Bowling Section and 66 from Croquet. Finances were not very robust in these inter-war years, with special levies being required in some seasons. But the club survived and with 477 members (Tennis 248, Bowls 162, Croquet 67) in February 1956 it celebrated its 50th anniversary. Each Section 'did its own thing' although there is a note about the splendid tea provided by 'the ladies' to mark the occasion, apparently implying some common celebration was held.

The report from the Executive Committee to the 1958 AGM is distinctly curious, for there is no mention of dissension in the ranks, but more of that in a later chapter.

When it did and the three clubs began to run their own affairs - the United Women's Bowling Club had been formed, but was all but an appendage of the men's club until somewhat later - there was still a need for some overall authority to control matters of mutual concern for all the parties. The Pavilion Committee was formed and it held its first meeting on 5th October, 1959, surviving a little over thirty years, reaching just into 1990s. Two members from each section, plus a non-voting secretary made up the Pavilion Committee which in theory was a sort of umpire if plans of the sections conflicted, and had the power to decide which section, Bowls, Croquet or Tennis, had the first claim on the pavilion in such circumstances. However, the problem never got that far; the sections were always able to sort things out among themselves.

To return to the question of the pavilion itself, on the ground floor there were toilets, showers and a storage area for the croquet and bowls clubs. The plumbing facilities, recalled the late Ernie Horwood,

were not up to present day standards. As we have seen, the lawns were watered with water pumped from the river - and some people drank it, apparently without too dramatic consequences. A septic tank was sited in front of the pavilion under the position of one of the present-day bowling greens. At one end there was a tethering ring for the horse, which 'disappeared' at the weekends. There is a reference to the age and poor condition of the pavilion in the minutes of the Christchurch City Council meeting of 30th August 1977, when the council discussed the problem of the pavilion which "is very old and extremely dilapidated". It was in "an unsound condition, badly infected with borer, and many years ago was given a useful life of ten years."

The minute goes on to say that "the clubs claim they are losing members because of the inadequate facilities", despite the fact that since 1956 the membership had grown to tennis 436, bowls 60 men 28 women, croquet 50 with 40 honorary. The council heard that "the present pavilion is not very suitable" and that the tennis club would prefer to erect its own facilities. But, "it has cash reserves of only \$5,000 and is extremely unlikely to be able to finance the building of separate facilities". The Bowling Club was reported to have reserves of between \$7,000 and \$10,000 while the croquet club has no finance available at all."

The City Council decided that the clubs should meet and decide what they wanted to do, with options including the demolition of the second storey and renovating the ground floor or demolishing the entire building and erecting a new pavilion. In fact the club was almost spared the agony of a decision because there was a violent storm not long after this meeting, which broke windows and blew off some of the roof. Fortunately the sons of a croquet player, Jack McNab, were builders and came to the rescue with scaffolding. With their help and that of some club members, the broken windows and the missing tiles from the bowling end of the building roof were soon replaced. Less fortunately all their good work was destroyed

by the fire that burned the pavilion to the ground a couple of years later, as we will see in a later chapter.

3. THE FOUR THREATS: Revolution, Conflagration, Desecration, Abrogation

The first threat: Revolution

The mid 1950s saw cracks appearing in the unity of the United Club, indeed chasms might not be too strong a word to use to describe the open hostility which arose then. The undoubted friction and shenanigans came to a head in the last quarter of the decade. The first reference to dissolution was made at the Executive Committee's meeting on 18th September, 1956, when it was moved that "...a special general meeting be called to dissolve the clubs..." At this distance it was apparently out of the blue, for the available minutes are frustratingly sparse on detail. The motion was lost on a show of hands. However the meeting did pass a motion relating to the rules of the Club. Then, at the annual meeting on 24th September, sensation. A letter from the Bowling section pointed out that since a 1937 rule change had not been registered, the meeting would have to be conducted under the 1911 rules. Consequently, the chairman Mrs E G McNish "then stated that she had personally been advised by the president of the Bowling Section ... that she was not entitled to take the chair ... and that she wished to vacate the chair. This was in spite of the fact that at the July meeting of the Executive Committee it was stated that "one amendment (to the 1911 rules) had been registered in 1944." The meeting also rejected a move to build a new pavilion.

The extent of the conflict and the implications of the rule changes prompted Brian Stedman the vice-chairman of the club, who was also the chairman of the Tennis Section [still in 2005 an active tennis player and stalwart of the Tennis Club] to write to The Registrar of Incorporated Societies pointing out what he deemed to be an

iniquitous situation. The letter, dated 3rd November 1958, and held in the New Zealand Archives, set out the problem so clearly that it is reproduced here in full.

Dear Sir,

The following rule was passed at a Special General Meeting of the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club Inc., held at 1 p.m. on Saturday 1st November 1958.

"Rule 47"

"That the Club may be dissolved or wound up in the manner prescribed by and under the provisions of the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 and the regulations made thereunder. On the dissolution of the Club, the assets remaining after all legal claims on the Club have been satisfied, shall be disposed of in such manner as the Club may have determined prior to its dissolution."

You will remember that recently an attempt was made to register a new set of rules of the Club; a Bowling Section objection was upheld. This led to the situation that the potential voting strengths of the various sections of the Club was as follows:-

Bowls	150 approximately
Tennis	45 "
Croquet	6 "

The membership of the various sections as shown in the last Annual Report was as follows:-

Bowls Men	156
Women	46
Tennis Men	49
Women	46
Junior & Intermediate Boys and Girls	126
Croquet Men	9
Women	53
Total	485

You will note that the proposed new rule authorizes the Club to dispose of the surplus assets as it feels fit. The Club is dominated by the Bowling Section, and it is felt by the Tennis Section that the minority sections of the Club have lost the protection regarding the disposal of funds they formerly had under the previous rule 47.

As it is the intention of the Bowling Section to dissolve the Club, the

alteration of the dissolution rule in their possible favour, is viewed with concern by the Tennis Section.

I lodge an objection to Rule 47 on the grounds that minority interests of the Club have no protection from a dominant section of the Club.

Yours faithfully

B.M.Stedman

Well, stirring times indeed. While the club at large may have been unaware of the moves to amend Rule 47, and with so many of the minute books and other archival material lost in the 1979 fire, records of the events are now few and memories of it are all but gone. However, the process seems clear as recorded in the minutes of the Bowls Section – which survived the fire – and which also reveal that it was calling itself the United Bowling Club by this time. Bowlers' discontent must have been bubbling under the surface for some time, but their first reference to any of the matters leading to dissolution seem to have been at a bowls committee meeting of 27th, February 1958, when the term "Dissolution" was first used. It was placed on the agenda for the next meeting, when it was referred to as "Section Control" and the minutes expressed members' opinions that "each section ..." should have "... far more control of their funds" Mr K Samms, who it transpires was to be a prime mover in working towards the United Club's dissolution, moved "That the Bowling section take steps to have complete control over all finances obtained from its members".

The first step had been taken and a course was soon to be followed with precise planning. Mr Samms' motion became a notice of motion at the 7th June 1958 annual meeting of the Bowling section and he declared it was "not dissolution, but each section (is) to have more control of its affairs." He was strongly supported by Mr V V Gallagher – a noted champion bowler – and the minutes quoted him saying "it was only halfway to what he would like ... it was only a start and one success would lead to another".

Then, at a special meeting on 13th July 1958 "to discuss sectional

control... "there entered another major player in the dissolution saga. Mr T Leitch "a bowler and solicitor" was "present to give legal advice." After much discussion it was left to him to "interview the Registrar of Incorporated Societies" undoubtedly about rule changes. At the next meeting, 15th July, 1958, Mr Leitch delivered his considered judgement: "As sectional control would not obtain exactly what we wanted, dissolution would be the best". That statement alone seems to have driven the Bowling section along the course it set. However, he did suggest a conciliatory approach to the other two sections on more than one occasion, although he saw it as being from a position of strength since "the position had so changed to our advantage, with only a simple majority for dissolution". Again the rules were at the centre of bowls calculations.

A Bowling section special general meeting was told of "...the lack of coöperation of the other two sections." It was also told by the secretary, Mr Hasell – who, recall was to become the club's liquidator – that "the rules were not registered" and later explained to the committee that a previous secretary (of the combined clubs' Executive Committee) told him "the 1948 rules were not registered because they were nearly the same as the 1911 rules". Therein lies a major blunder leading to considerable anguish. It should be said that, among all the minutes researched for this history, Mr Hasell's were the best by far; well-structured, informative, seemingly complete, they told the story well. He was apparently a man of precise disposition.

Mr Hasell's neat, clear script went on to record progress through to dissolution from a Bowling section point of view; the October, 1958 minute of Mr Leitch's statement asking for a general meeting of the club "to consider amendments to the rules"; a report that showed "each section if on its own would have shown a profit..."; the detailing of which piece of equipment would go where, in the event of dissolution - including Mr Samms' report that "gave items of expenditure showing that the tennis section got the lions share...";

Mr Leitch's detailing of Mr Barrer's "attempt to register the 1937 rules ..." (referred to later in this chapter) and his own preparation of a copy of rules to be put to the Incorporated Societies' body; the tactics the Bowling section would employ at a United club's general meeting to revise the rules – including plans to ask the woman president of the United club to vacate the chair because the 1911 rules did not allow female executives.

He would also seem to have taken impeccable notes of the meetings of delegates from all three sections. One, on 23rd October, 1958 revealed that tennis and croquet appeared to accept dissolution as a *fait accompli*. They asked the bowling representatives to "draw up a schedule showing ideas...." By the end of the year the Bowling section had worked out which piece of land went where, rental charges, equipment allocation, pavilion levies, even a pavilion committee structure, which varied at different times, and at one stage proposed two bowling delegates and one each from tennis and croquet.

In 1959, the year of the split, the Bowling committee kept the pressure on. Its language became less tolerant – within its committee ranks, at least. Its president, Mr Bob Grant told one meeting "Mr Stedman was in favour of dissolution because they (tennis) could lower their subscriptions and so get more members". He noted it would be "a danger to us; crowding the pavilion." After an apparently abortive further meeting of the three sections' representatives, the bowls minutes noted there had been little progress from the previous such meeting and this time "the other two sections had made some very indecisive statements". The Bowling section pushed on inexorably, each meeting adding another piece to the jigsaw, although interestingly, there was no mention of dissolution in the annual report and the meeting was delayed considerably, forcing some members close to revolt. The other two sections were criticised for "using delaying tactics all through". Then Mr Grant delivered a coup de grace; in his opinion the Christchurch City Council representatives

at meetings "should have seen the stupidity of us carrying on together, by the stupid statements made by the representatives of the tennis and especially the Croquet."

The bowls section had planned for the meeting to be in two parts, the first to decide on allotting the assets of the combined club, the second to make the decision to dissolve the club.

The response from the Registrar to Mr Stedman's letter is not known precisely, but as will be seen all did not go according to plan at the special general meeting, nor did things go swimmingly for the Bowling section. The New Zealand Archives contain, beside the letter from Mr Stedman, this letter from a firm of Barristers and Solicitors that was also sent to the Registrar of Incorporated Societies. It was dated 18th February 1959.

Dear Sir,

On the 16th December 1958 my firm was asked by the Secretary of the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club to withdraw the 1937 Rules from registration, and pursuant to that instruction, and acting in good faith, our Mr Wilson wrote to you on the 11th December 1958 asking that the Rules be withdrawn and today a cheque for £1. being the fee which was paid at the time.

We have learned since, however, that at the meeting at which the Secretary was elected and the officers of the Club were elected, all women members were deprived of their vote.

The writer has already given an opinion to a section of the Club, the effect of which is that such action on the part of the male members of the Club in depriving the female members from a vote was invalid and would not be upheld by any Court. In the result the election was invalid, the appointment of the Executive and Secretary was invalid and the instructions were beyond the powers of the persons purporting to be acting.

We withdraw our request dated the 11th December 1958, and we return your £1.

If the persons purporting to be the Executive of the Club decide to take some action through some other firm, then this is of no concern of ours, but we do not feel that in the circumstances we

can be party to what seems to be a flagrant breach of natural justice perpetrated on the women members of the Club.

Yours faithfully,
BARRIER & THOMPSON
B. A. Barrer

Mr Barrer's firm, trustees for the club, also refused to approve a transfer of funds between accounts for the club's operating expenses, and promptly had their authority revoked. However, the club's fiscal position was dire, for the June executive meeting was told "...the available funds were only sufficient to meet outgoings for the next few weeks." Outstanding subscriptions were at a breathtaking level, £107.5.8, very substantial for the time.

Fortunately Brian Stedman has been able to flesh out the background to this correspondence. He recalls that Brian A Barrer was a member of the Tennis Section - and at one stage had been secretary of the executive committee - and that the secretary of the Bowling section L B Hasell was in 1959 appointed to oversee the liquidation, and reconstitution of the club. The financial position of the club in the late 1950s was not as healthy as it should have been, and despite the influx of players after the war, membership of the Tennis section was falling. The subscription rate was raised by 10/- a year. This possibly increased the rate of loss of members in the section, but added income to the Bowling and Croquet sections whose membership was comparatively stable.

However even the combined incomes were insufficient, and the Christchurch City Council became involved trying to get the Bowling section to withdraw their attempt to close down the club. They also tried to allocate the costs of running and rebuilding the pavilion among the sections. They argued that the Bowling section should bear the lion's share as it had the largest membership and made greater use of the pavilion than either the Tennis or Croquet sections. This remained the principle, although as the Tennis section recovered its

strength the proportion of costs was more evenly spread.

All attempts at mediation were to no avail and on 9th April, 1959, after informal meetings to discuss the impasse, at the first of two general meetings needed to enforce the dissolution of the club, the vote for the split was 103 to 59. Croquet and tennis opposed the bowling section's move, but were hugely outvoted. The motion "that the club be wound up voluntarily" drew an amendment seeking that the move be made "...after the present sections have formed themselves into three separate incorporated bodies..." with the assets being shared. The chairman refused to accept it. Another "that the matter of liquidation be held over indefinitely" he ruled out of order. The Press was on hand to inform its readers of proceedings and what the three sections' representatives had to say. Mr Barrer, was staunch in his opposition, saying the Bowling section "should not wish to dismember the club by trampling over the weaker sections. It is the negation of sportsmanship." He added: "To call it voluntary liquidation is a misnomer; only one section is in favour of it."

The second meeting on 8th August 1959 voted 74-52 to approve the dissolution and also determined the disposing of the assets of the club. The Town Clerk wrote to tell the club of "...the reversion of assets to the Council in the event of the club being wound up." The meeting was told that the club's assets would need to be realised in cash, since the Christchurch City Council owned the grounds – pavilion, lawns, hedges and fixed assets. All movable equipment would have to be sold – all that would be left would be nets, lawnmowers, bowls and croquet equipment." Each club was to receive its particular paraphernalia, but there were many items dispensed which seem trivial at this distance. Among items the bowling section received were "china milk jugs small 9". The 'ladies' bowling club received "sugar basins small 30"; indoor bowls "10 teaspoons; tennis "backless seats 7" and croquet "forms 7". So, each section moved on and became a separate club, each going its own way to different fortunes.

Just before the 1979 fire, with the pavilion almost literally on its last legs, there was a move to raise funds to rebuild it for the use of all three sections. The appeal was led by Mr John Midgeley. The idea of a single new pavilion was firmly opposed by the Tennis club, under the leadership of Brian Stedman, who argued for clubrooms nearer their courts, serving their members better and also to store their equipment closer to where it was used.

A City Councillor, Helen Garrett, was on the other side, arguing for a single pavilion under the slogan 'No new building in Hagley Park'. Being a tennis player, at another club, she would have been well aware of the amount of equipment the section needed to bring out - mowers, line markers, nets and so on. But it was not until new councillors were elected that any progress was made, and eventually agreement was reached to allow two new buildings, one for the Tennis club and the other to be shared by the Bowling and Croquet clubs.

The second threat: Conflagration

On 1st July 1979, exactly seventy-four years after the United Club was formed, the pavilion burnt to the ground. It was a disaster not only because of the loss of much equipment, but also because of the loss of so many records and memorabilia. The Press the next day, on an inside page, carried a dramatic picture of firemen fighting the blaze. Unfortunately the photograph was taken not by a staff photographer - which would have meant a copy could be obtained from The Press - but by a member of the public who handed it in. The picture itself can be seen in the Christchurch City Council's Central City Library on a microfiche, but the quality is too poor to reproduce. The story that accompanied the picture read:

"Fire gutted the United Tennis Club's pavilion in North Hagley Park last evening. The two-storey wooden building was reduced to a charred shell of timber with the walls barely standing, after fire swept through it about 7.45 p.m. Small pockets of fire were still burning in the pavilion at 9 p.m. Seven fire appliances answered a call from a motorist who noticed the fire as he drove

past the park.

One bystander said he had seen a glow in the sky shortly before 8 p.m. Then the building had suddenly 'shot up in flames'. A small crowd was drawn by the glow of the fire and the thick smoke which spread over Riccarton. The Ministry of Transport closed Riccarton Avenue to traffic while firemen doused the flames.

The pavilion was shared by the tennis club, a bowling club and a Croquet club. It is believed that nets, lawn mowers, and rollers were in the building.

The tennis club had asked the Christchurch City Council, which owns the land, for another pavilion and had started fund raising two years ago, according to a club member. The building had been in a poor state of repair and many weatherboards had been rotten.

It was the second fire in two months to destroy a building in Hagley Park. The Botanic Gardens' tea kiosk was razed on April 25 in suspicious circumstances."

The cause of the fire is not known. Enquiries to the New Zealand Fire Service have met with a blank - hardly surprising perhaps after nearly a quarter of a century and at least one restructuring of the service. But to add to the suspicion that the fire may not have been wholly accidental, the next day's paper reveals that there was another fire on the same day, at the Kiwi Bacon Factory.

The pavilion had two floors and the clubs their own informal spaces upstairs - Bowling and Croquet overlooking the croquet lawns and tennis at the other end. For major events it was all used by whichever club was running the event. Bridge was regularly played upstairs by guests and club members. On the ground floor there were toilets, showers and a storage area for croquet and bowling sections.

There was a major storm some years before the fire. A croquet player, Jack McNab, managed to borrow scaffolding from his sons, who were builders, to repair the broken windows and replace the

missing roof tiles at the bowling end of the Club. That the Club survived at all is a credit to the hard work and dedication of the members. On 15th October 1979 the Council approved a temporary building to be erected nearby, and this was used for some years to store the replaced equipment. It was, ruled the Council, to be a metal building 9 metres by 6 metres and the walls were to be painted white. The motion allowing this temporary shed also included the proviso that "The United Pavilion Committee be requested to actively pursue the establishment of permanent facilities and to submit a progress report to the council at three monthly intervals."

The lasting effect of the fire was the complete overhaul of the United Club's structure. The three sports all decided they would prefer to be independent clubs rather than sections of a United Club. But united, they sought permission from the Christchurch City Council to build new accommodation, and the council agreed to two new buildings, one for the Tennis Club and one to be shared by the Bowling and Croquet Clubs. This latter building was constructed to create one big area, but in the event both clubs flexed their new muscles and a wall was built to give each its own space. The wall remains to this day with a section that could be removed without knocking down the whole structure. So today's three independent clubs were formed in the early 1980s, but each decided to retain the word United in their official name. The Tennis section had flirted with the name Hagley, but it lasted just a few months. All three had already registered as incorporated bodies some years earlier. The Bowling club was registered on 5th December 1951; the Croquet Club on 19th October 1959; the Tennis Club on 13th September 1973. It is a pity perhaps, in the centenary year, that the United Tennis Club was no more. In mid-2005, just a few months before this book was published, it changed its name to Hagley Park Tennis Club.

The third threat: Desecration

Another threat, this time to the continued existence of the three

separate United clubs came in December 1990. The Christchurch City Council issued the Hagley Park Draft Management Plan" which proposed, on page 56 "...the United Tennis, Bowls and Croquet Clubs ... shall not have leases with terms over 15 years". It added "Comment: In the long term, opportunities to extend the Botanic Gardens are extremely limited. Because of this any future extensions of the Botanic Gardens and woodland areas may need to extend into areas currently utilized by sports clubs etc". In other words it proposed limiting the three clubs' leases to fifteen years and thereafter being able to plough up all three grounds and planting trees or handing over the area, in whole or in part, to the Botanic Gardens.

As may be imagined, the violation of our home turf this plan would cause, if implemented, evoked a most strenuous response from the clubs, who were joined in their protest by the RSA Bowling Club and ultimately by no fewer than another 88 protesters. The joint reaction from all three clubs was to vigorously reject the proposals in the Draft Plan. The extensive process of coordinating this response was masterminded by Mr Lindsay North, of the United Lawn Tennis Club, fortuitously a lawyer.

His hard-hitting and detailed response, dated 28th February 1991 submitted to the City Council, pointed out not only our objections, but also some inherent contradictions within the Draft Plan itself. Much was made of the fact that the clubs ran themselves at no cost to the City Council, paying not only for the maintenance of the grounds but also for the buildings associated with the clubs. Aside from the covering letter the submission ran to 20 pages of typescript, plus a further eight pages of support from others, including the Presidents of the Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association, the Canterbury Croquet Association and the New Zealand Croquet Council. The United Bowling Club sensibly kept its submission brief, concluding "Many of the individual factors referred to by the RSA Bowling Club and the United Croquet Club also apply to this club but are not repeated here to avoid unnecessary duplication".

This attack on the United clubs was so serious it is worth recording how it was seen by the clubs. In Mr North's paper he wrote in the Introduction:

1. This submission has been necessitated by suggestions made in the Draft Management Plan (DMP) dated December 1990 which, if implemented, would have the eventual effect of causing all the Clubs to cease to exist and the ultimate destruction of the facilities which they have developed to date.

2. The objectives of the submissions is for the DMP to be amended so as to remove the detrimental effects of the Plan on the Clubs concerned and for the final Management Plan to recognize that the Clubs, the facilities which they have established and the uses of those facilities for sporting purposes are an integral part of Hagley Park and are compatible with the Park's character and identity

3. The particular suggestions in the DMP to which objection is made are :-

1. The suggestion that woodlands may be extended into the areas currently leased by the Clubs.

2. The suggestion that the Botanic Gardens be extended into the areas currently leased by the Clubs.

3. The suggestion that the Club leases be limited to a term of fifteen (15) years.

4. The underlying assumption made by the DMP that "passive and informal recreation" is somehow of greater value and in more demand than more active sporting based recreational activities.

4. It is the view of the Clubs that in so far as the DMP affects the Clubs, the Plan has not recognised many factors which are of relevance, has been based on assumptions about which there is little or no empirical evidence and is based upon an incorrect view of the status of the Clubs' leases and an incorrect perception of the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977, the Christchurch City Reserves (empowering Act 1971) and the Council's own District Scheme.

5. Nothing is mentioned in the Plan that sets out the Council's priorities for management activities. "Why" and "What" the objectives of the Plan are, are omitted. This contributes to a vague Management Plan with a lack of clearly defined policies."

In the face of this onslaught it is perhaps not surprising the relevant passages of the Draft Plan were wholly deleted following a meeting of the Reserves Hearing Panel on 29th April 1991.

It is of course debatable whether or not this suggestion in the draft Management Plan for the park to phase out the United clubs led to hopes and ideas taking root in the minds of the High School Old Boys' Rugby Club. Whether it did or not, they made a bid to acquire the Bowls and Croquet Clubs' lawns and club rooms, as is discussed in the next section. Had they succeeded, the outcome would have been similar - the ousting of two of the three United sports from the area they had occupied for almost a hundred years.

The fourth threat: Abrogation

The next threat came in the form of an attempt to abrogate our rights to the grounds, in effect an attempted takeover of the Bowling and Croquet Clubs by the High School Old Boys' Rugby Club in 1998. Having written to him, requesting a meeting at which to put forward a proposition that would be of interest to him, a small group of their members visited the clubs together with Mr Warwick Scadden, who then had the guardianship of the park among his other council responsibilities. Attempts had apparently also been made to contact the Bowling Club by telephone and a hand written letter from the Old Boys' president - suggesting the same "matter of interest" - was left at the club's door. They had obviously given a lot of thought to it, for their plan was well advanced. They stated that because their own club rooms were not in the park while their playing field was, they had to cross a road to play, and re-cross it when they finished to reach their showering and toilet facilities. They argued that since, in accordance with the Management Plan, the City Council had refused to allow them to put up a new building in the park, they would like the council to eject the Bowling and Croquet Clubs and allow the rugby club to replace the existing buildings with one more suited to their needs, larger and with more car parking facilities. They would also remove the tree in the centre of the croquet lawns,

commenting that all six lawns would make an ideal rugby field. Their view seemed to be that since their plan was so obviously a good one, there could not be any objection to it. Indeed they presented their case almost as though it were a fait accompli.

Such a view was not well received by the two Clubs nor by Mr Scadden, who had been taken aback by the proposal. The rugby club proposal was an audacious one, allowing no place for tradition nor respect for other sports, or other park users. When told their idea was unacceptable they made a second proposal not involving taking over the bowls and croquet clubs, but called for a new building in the park. This was rejected for four basic reasons. First the disregard for existing tenants of the park; second the implication there should be a new, or a replacement building, whereas the park's Management Plan envisaged a reducing the number of buildings; third the increase in car parking envisaged; and fourth the probable after-hours activities, with perhaps unwelcome behaviour, if not by Old Boys' rugby players then possibly their visitors.

Despite the club's canvassing of other old boys in positions to give the rugby club advice, the City Council rejected the proposal, to the very great relief of the Bowling and Croquet Clubs. In the event some new lighting was installed, and other work was carried out by the council in North Hagley Park to enable rugby to be practised there in the winter evenings.

But the episode should serve as a reminder that the three clubs are privileged occupants of a marvellous site in the middle of a marvellous city. While we earn kudos for the good order in which we keep our corner of Hagley Park, that in itself is no guarantee against determined assailants. Our best protection must be for all three clubs to have large and healthy memberships and to show we make good use of the land we have been privileged to lease.

4. THE PAVILION COMMITTEE YEARS: 1959-1991

Pavilion Replacement, Levies, Water and Dissolution

When the newly formed Pavilion Committee met for the first time on 5th October, 1959 it was virtually business as usual as it replaced the Executive Committee which had run the affairs of the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club for nearly fifty-five years. Its greatest challenge was to rally to the call of the new-found independence of the three original clubs as well as the developing identity of the Women's Bowling Club. That first meeting, at which tennis's Brian Stedman was appointed to the chair, concluded that each club should take out its own insurance, while the committee would take out a policy on the pavilion, its fittings and equipment. Each club was asked to pay £20 towards the committee's insurance output "without prejudice" until it was determined how the costs would be shared. Tennis suggested it should share 20 percent of the costs, croquet the same and bowls 60 percent. That matter was to be a continuing theme throughout the committee's reign.

Another testing issue was the deteriorating state of the pavilion and it was to get first call on funds to make repairs. Those first committee members, Messrs Stedman and Andrews from tennis, T Wallace and Morris from bowls and Mesdames F McTeigue and T B Grant from croquet wrestled too with a fair allocation of the pavilion for such matters as afternoon tea breaks on Saturdays – 2.45pm for croquet, 3-3.30pm for bowls and from 3.30pm for tennis, charges for lockers and such minutiae. The committee set a cracking pace, at times meeting on consecutive days, but almost always meeting at least once a month. A week after the initial meeting, it decided insurance on the pavilion should be £7,000. The first signs of disagreement surfaced then, bowls' Mr Wallace reporting that

“bowls were not satisfied with the tennis suggestion...” of the percentage each club should pay to expenses. It wanted to pay only 50 percent. Much of their work involved agreeing to pavilion use by the clubs including for Sunday play, Christmas parties, winter and evening activity, keys, crockery, conveniences,

And in a compromise the committee settled on bowls paying 55 percent of expenses, tennis 25 percent and croquet 20 percent, but the secretary was to seek information about “total subscription income and total membership lists.” The clubs were to have separate listings for the telephone, which interestingly had been connected since 1906. The first regular early requests came when the committee asked each club for more money – bowls £40, tennis £30 and croquet £20 - because its balance was less than £20. A new auditor, Mr Larcombe from the Bowling section told the committee it should seek legal advice about incorporating “to give authority to fix incomes from respective clubs.” Mr Brian Barrer, who was later to be a central figure in incorporation discussions, was to be consulted and later he was to draw up a constitution for the committee.

By March 1962, Mrs M F McTeigue was in the chair, unaware that, when it came to the dissolution discussions the club’s incorporation rules preventing women from holding office would force another female chairman to vacate it at a general meeting. Over three years later, with the frequency of meetings seeming to have lessened, 1965 saw a committee letter to the clubs seeking a levy payment of £45 from bowls, £40 from tennis and £10 from croquet, the proportions a reflection of the changing memberships. The following year began a relationship with the Lincoln Rugby Football Club which wanted to use the pavilion in winter. It continued for some years and at one point Lincoln offered money for the pavilion building fund and to become a partner in its management, but nothing seemed to come of that. Then, in 1967, Mr Stedman, chairman for a second term, provided figures which showed that in eight years total income had barely outstripped costs. The previous

year, £451.2.1 had been spent on the pavilion "more than twice the expenditure of any other year. The income was nearly £70 less than the repairs." It prompted a delegation to the Christchurch City Council "regarding the pavilion building." The council had its architects look at the pavilion and gave the committee a number of options, basically either repairs or replacement. The clubs views showed "considerable variation" so the committee asked the council to meet it again to clarify the points.

In the meantime, the tennis club had been turned down in seeking a separate pavilion and the Pavilion Committee gave its tacit approval of this when it told the city council the three clubs were unanimous in wanting a pavilion for bowls and croquet and one for tennis. The Mayor of Christchurch had also suggested the bowling club amalgamate with the RSA Bowling Club."

In late 1969 a special general meeting discussed a crisis with water, one of the clubs' three pumps needing urgent repair. The need prompted the committee to go further and look at high pressure water from the city council. When told it would "involve the club (sic) in payment for the water", it decided to inquire into the cost of a new pump. A seven and-a-half horse power motor and a centrifugal pump were installed for water to the three clubs and it moved to have the domestic supply replaced by a high pressure unit. The committee also agreed to "make itself responsible for maintenance of the equipment supplying water to the bowling greens." The water issue continued to bedevil the committee to the end of its life and tennis – which said it was not interested in high pressure water because of the high cost - still takes water from the Avon River. The urgency of the domestic supply prompted the next meeting to agree to pay \$270 for two four hundred gallon tanks. But first it could not pay "until the receipt of more finance" a situation about which the secretary had previously warned "the balance of levies for 1970/1971 may be required at short notice." The committee sought an immediate "\$200 from the three clubs due to abnormal expenditure."

April 1971 brought a deputation from Lincoln Rugby which "proposed that their club wished to become the fourth member of the committee." They 'intimated' help with finance for a new pavilion. The committee accepted the idea in principle and set up a committee for "ways and means of accomplishment." Urgency was urged. In 1973, the Ways and Means committee, apparently in some kind of recess was 'revived' and with the secretary was to prepare a proposal to be submitted to the council. Late that year Lincoln was given approval to install further showers, but should "stand total cost of same."

The pavilion continued to gobble up the cash, and the committee wrote to the clubs in June 1971, seeking \$400 for repairs, then in September told them that "pavilion expenses were to be levied on a minimum of \$500 p year "(sic) A flurry of exchanged opinions revealed cracks in the hoped for seamless workings of the club, when a letter from indoor bowls about the positioning of their playing tables – which encroached on croquet's use of the pavilion – brought the response "that the Bowls do not dictate to the committee." The committee was doing the dictating when it told the clubs again "they may be called on for a slightly larger contribution in this year." In 1973 the levies the clubs paid were \$250 each by bowls and tennis and \$125 by croquet. Good news from the council in 1974 was the approval in principle of two new pavilions. The clubs were beginning to congratulate themselves about the two-pavilion proposition. Tennis was gleeful and expressed appreciation for the work of the chairman and secretary.

The Pavilion Committee's longest serving secretary, Iris Horwood, was appointed from 1st October, 1975, seeing the job out until the committee's demise in 1991. In 1976 the balance of numerical power had altered, and as a consequence tennis was paying 40 percent of the levies charged, bowls and croquet 30 percent. The telephone became an issue when the bowling club had the Post Office disconnect the toll system, because it was being used for unauthorised

toll calls. The Pavilion Committee demanded bowls pay the \$10 fee, to which bowls replied it would not have the account under the Pavilion Committee's name, and it paid the fee. Later that year the downstairs telephone booth was the seat of a fire that had been lit there, but it went out before taking hold.

The ongoing debate about levies took another turn after croquet objected to paying the same amount as bowls. A special general meeting was unable to resolve the issue, so the city council was called upon to exercise its right to have two representatives on the Pavilion Committee. With their help the level of the levies was resolved – using a formula which had been used previously by the committee. The council's apparent approval of two pavilions seems to have got lost in the detail, so the secretary was instructed to write to the council suggesting it build a new pavilion – or pavilions – “and lease same back to the clubs.” The pace, previously snail-like was about to be revved up with the 1979 pavilion fire, but before that the Christchurch Gas Company advised that the condition of the gas main to the pavilion required it to be disconnected because it was not economical to maintain.

Then, on 7th July, after processing the early detail of its agenda the committee was told about the fire that had razed the pavilion five nights previously. It was another fire starting near the telephone booth and the croquet club's belongings were “charred ruins,” while the piano fell from the upper floor “with only iron work remaining.” It became the Pavilion Committee's job to have the building demolished and the site cleared. The committee was fortunate indeed that a one-time president of the Bowling club, Bob Grant had a carrying business and arranged the removal of the debris at no cost. The Christchurch Star wrote that it was “an historic building in New Zealand sport...” and “...many champions had passed through its doors...” also that “...in the early days it was a showpiece of sport in Christchurch.” It stated what members had long known, that the fire “was a mixed blessing.”

The hunt was on for temporary premises while plans were prepared for new headquarters. Any makeshift building would have to be on the site of the old pavilion, because of the positioning of sewerage and drain pipes. The dawning of the computer age was to intervene when it was learned that a new insurance policy had not been received from General Insurance because it was installing new computers. The temporary building was obtained from Versatile Garages, who quoted \$4,485 for it. The quest for the new pavilion(s) took some twists and turns, with the council asking bowls and croquet how they felt about tennis seeking a separate one, but tennis's application was declined in any case. The Pavilion Committee lodged a pavilion application on behalf of bowls and croquet and naturally enough the tennis delegates Brian Stedman and G Martin voted against it. Ironically, too Mr Stedman requested of the committee - and got approval - that the tennis club be able to use a committee report which had given reasons why one pavilion would not be satisfactory.

By December 1981 tennis had been given permission to build a separate pavilion on its chosen site and six months later the Pavilion Committee decided to split the insurance money of \$22,477.50 in the proportions 40 percent to tennis, 33 percent bowls and 27 percent croquet. Water was an issue once again, linking to the Riccarton Borough Council supply being considered because it was cheaper. The tennis pavilion was opened in 1982, but there seems to have been no mention of the fact in the Pavilion Committee minutes. Then, more dissension when the croquet and bowls delegates felt sure a \$10,000 grant from the Christchurch City Council was to be spent on their replacement pavilion, while tennis delegates were of the clear opinion that it was to be used by all three clubs. So, another letter seeking resolution of an issue was despatched to the council, while the two associated clubs were told not to spend any more than 60 percent of the cheque's value. The reply was not good news for tennis, the General Manager and Town Clerk confirming that the grant was for the replacement pavilion on the site of the old one.

The water situation was more equitable, with permission being

granted to run a water pipe from Deans Avenue to the two pavilions, at a cost of \$1,500 to be shared equally. The Pavilion Committee's minutes had been surprisingly mute on the larger elements of the development of the two pavilions, but full of detail on such matters as "all rubble (from demolition of the outbuildings) to be used to fill the old septic tank " and "the secretary to be responsible for counting crockery" and "the teapot to go to either bowls or croquet." However it was clear that the combined pavilion was close to completion when on 24th March 1983 the committee decided that the temporary building could be sold. It also decided that \$5,534.13 in the C.S.B. "be transferred to the bowls/croquet pavilion management committee's account. Then, the next meeting was to be held in the tennis pavilion. In October the temporary building was sold for \$2,000. By then, in what would have seemed to have been some kind of final act, the Bowls-Croquet pavilion was opened on 17th September 1983.

However, the Pavilion Committee continued, although the minutes of 3rd February, 1986 recorded that "as there was very little business ... it has not been necessary to hold a meeting annually to elect a chairman", so it elected a bowls representative, Mr Jack Goold. However, it was not finished by a long chalk, with water, or at least the metering of its supply from the Riccarton Borough Council not working, so the Pavilion Committee was unable to decide how much each club should pay. They were waiting, in any case, to be connected to the city's high pressure system. Then in late 1987 the bowls-croquet pavilion was connected to the city supply, but tennis apparently not, for "tennis was to be sent the Riccarton borough water accounts".

Finality over the tennis water supply seemed near in March 1988, when the Pavilion Committee recorded that the tennis club required water for another month "then they would be tapping into the City water." But, a meeting of February 1989 noted that "tennis did not connect to C.C.C. water owing to high costs." It applied to the North Canterbury Catchment Board and was granted river water rights for

three years. Bowls and croquet were disappointed "because they wanted to see the pumps and pumphouse removed", because they took up car parking space. The committee itself expressed concern because it "delayed the development of the car park for bowls and croquet." Furthermore, it delayed "the winding up of the Pavilion Committee and distribution of accumulated funds." Eighteen months later, the tennis club apparently planning to continue to take river water, suggested moving the pumphouse closer to the fence and building a smaller cover. Tennis members then demolished the old pumphouse after being granted salvage rights.

It was, at last, the beginning of the end, for on 13th September, 1991, the minutes of the final Pavilion Committee recorded that it be disbanded and funds divided one third each way, each club receiving \$870.52. The Bowling club also received an extra \$724.17 for extra pumphouse expenses it had incurred. The final act of the committee, as expressed by the Bowling Club was to give "thanks to Iris (Horwood) for a grand job completed."



The United Bowling Tennis and Croquet Club's first pavilion photographed in 1906 soon after its opening. As membership increased, it became necessary to extend it by the 1920s, building a first floor enclosing the balcony

After World War Two, still looking a picture in its park setting, the pavilion, with its 1920s refurbishment was in advanced middle age and required constant attention. By the time of the 1979 fire it was a financial burden.





The pavilion was a social centre for the three sports, with indoor bowls and bridge also being played upstairs. In this 1946 scene lady bowlers enjoy an end-of-season gathering in the bright March sunshine.



Social activity came to a fiery end with the 1979 pavilion fire. Not until 1983 did the three clubs once again have pavilions as sporting homes. Rebuilding (below) took place alongside a temporary building, a double garage at left





The Brian Stedman Tennis pavilion was built in 1983 after several years battling the Christchurch City Council for approval.



The Bowling Club pavilion was built jointly with the Croquet Club and was a welcome improvement on the old building destroyed in the 1979 fire



The Croquet Club section of the combined pavilion adjoins the Bowling Club's, sharing their idyllic tree protected portion of North Hagley Park



United Croquet has a fine record in supplying NZ representatives, with John Prince (left) and Arthur Ross (right) regular performers for New Zealand.

Roger Murfitt (below left) played in five MacRobertson Shield teams and has worked tirelessly for NZ Croquet. Three recent internationals are Peter Parkinson



(bottom left), Jane McIntyre (bottom right) and Geoff Beale (centre)





Tennis players and supporters gathered in front of the United pavilion during the 1906-7 New Zealand Tennis Championship



Canterbury Museum

The United tennis courts were popular in the early years, with dress tailored to the fashions of the time. The courts were in front of the pavilion, instead of in their current southerly location

One of United tennis's outstanding players was Geoff Ollivier, fourth from left in this group. Ollivier won seven national singles titles and was Canterbury's first professional coach before the Depression forced his resignation.





A group of outstanding United tennis players. Jean MacGibbon (left) won the national singles title in 1952. Bob Pattinson, in front of the central group with (from left) E W Tipples, T W Callander and R J Telford, reached the national singles final as a youngster. May Speirs (at right) won the national singles four times in eight years



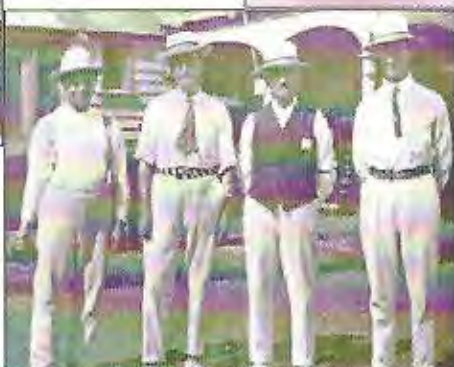
The name Brian Stedman is writ large in the history of the United club. Seen here with the Canterbury Administrator of the Year trophy in 2002 - 50 years after becoming an administrator - he joined United tennis in 1937. From WW2 to the demise of the combined club, he filled many positions, including Pavilion Committee chair several times. A voice of reason throughout the dissolution proceedings, he argued strongly for a separate tennis pavilion. Still a keen, regular tennis player, the tennis pavilion was named in his honour.



John Brown (right) first president of the United Bowling Club and later Mayor of Riccarton. He was also in the winning Isaac Woolf rink



Isaac Woolf (above right) skipping his United rink to a 'national' title, beating challenger, Norrie Bell, of Wellington's Newtown club



Early play on United's greens (below), with the 1958 Dominion tournament in progress (at bottom)



Woolf (above left) with his rink of William Fraser, John Brown Sen., John Brown Jun.





Amalgamation Day 8th June 1997 saw a United Bowling Club party, with life members Lucy Watson (left) and Joy Cleave cutting the celebration cake, Club president, Richard Haythornthwaite looks on



Instigator of the United Classic Pairs, Ray Forsyth (left) clinches sponsorship for the 1995 tournament with UDC manager, David Boyle



The amalgamated United club's first major playing success was in 2003, when the women's champion-of-champions' title was won by (left to right) Gill Beale (skip), Rhona Irving, Pat Kircher and Lois McCurdy

PART TWO

5. THE UNITED CROQUET CLUB

Some Aspects of its History

Historically, the many contributions to United, and to croquet, of some Croquet Club members have been quite outstanding. We don't always remember just what a huge debt we owe to our predecessors nor the special place United, and indeed, Canterbury, has in the history of croquet in New Zealand. For example, it used to be that croquet was played under the 'Sequence Law' by which the balls were played in the set order of blue, red, black and then yellow. The game was transformed by the adoption of the present 'Either Ball Law' under which the side playing with blue and black for example, can play either blue or black and thus prevent blue say, from ending its turn by putting its partner ball, black, next to yellow so as to give black an easy roquet to start its next turn. Canterbury had pioneered the adoption of the current format shortly before the First World War, even though the new law was not generally adopted until just after the war.

Unfortunately, most of the minute books, championship records and other combustible material was lost in the 1979 fire, hence the title of this chapter. However the high profile of the Club in its earlier days was such that there are references to it in a number of other sources. For example, it was reported in the New Zealand Croquet Gazette of November 1979, in an article by Mrs H A Penn that a croquet club was in existence in Hagley Park around 1866. Mrs Penn was the secretary of the United Croquet Club in the early 1940s and a committee member for many years afterwards. In the Gazette she

wrote: "It may not generally be known that the first club was formed in Christchurch in connection with the Christchurch Cricket Club. Play took place in the South Hagley Park opposite the present Caledonian Hotel. Croquet was played on the day the cricket club was opened. There is undeniable evidence that it was still in existence 1873, but it was not until 1900 that a formal application for joint facilities with lawn bowls and lawn tennis, was made to the Christchurch Domain Board for suitable facilities in Hagley Park. It was refused. However, five years after this initial application, permission for the three sports clubs was approved. Mr E J Ross spearheaded the application process, and was a leading influence in both the croquet and the bowling fraternities until his death in 1937.

These dates make United one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of croquet clubs in New Zealand. In the South Island's Timaru, in 1887, and Nelson, in 1901 at least, are older formal clubs than the United Croquet Club, but that is because the croquet club of the 1860s and 1870s was not called United. The name came into existence only when the three sports united after the application for their shared grounds was granted in 1905.

Once permission had been given, and as we have seen, at a total cost of £99.16.00 (say \$300 or so in 2004 in a simple currency conversion, but not in terms of wage rates) the City Council laid out the lawns. There were two croquet, two bowls and six tennis lawns, on land described in a historical review by Mr M J Barnett, the Superintendent of the Parks Department around 1950, as having been a council refuse dump full of tin cans and other rubbish and at times a mini lake "two or three feet deep". This area was cleaned up, the soil replaced, made level and re-seeded. The city council charged a rental of £16 per acre per year and interest at 4 1/2 per cent per year on the almost £100 the work had cost.

In 1905-1906, a pavilion was built for the use of all three sections, as the precursors of today's clubs were called. (As we have seen, unfortunately this pavilion fell into marked disrepair and in 1979

was burnt to the ground.) On 22nd June 1906 the secretary of The United Bowls, Tennis and Croquet Club applied to the Registrar of Friendly Societies in Wellington, for registration enclosing a fee of one guinea. This was refused, as the rules of the club did not specify its objectives. The £1.1.0 was returned.

The Secretary, the well-respected E J Ross, sought advice, changed the rules and secured registration on 4th September, 1906. No sooner had this been achieved than the rules were changed so as to 'allow visiting members' at a fee of 10/- a month, for men and 5/- a month, for women. The Registrar approved this change on 14th November 1906. Interestingly, bowlers were excluded from this rule.

Four years later, on 3rd August 1910, the secretary of the United Club's Croquet Section, Mr S S Blackburn, convened a meeting to form the Canterbury Croquet Association, the first such association in New Zealand. Mr H Croxton of Temuka (the South Canterbury town that, in the mid-1990s was to provide a president of the New Zealand Croquet Council, the late Miss Edwina Thompson) was elected Chairman, with Mr Blackburn secretary-treasurer. The association held its first tournament in 1911 on the United courts. Another year on, and on behalf of the Canterbury Croquet Association, Mr E J Ross proposed, unsuccessfully, the setting up of a national council. After the First World War, the Canterbury Association again took the initiative and in 1920 the New Zealand Croquet Council was formed and Mr Ross elected its first president. For the next ten years, or so, United was the largest croquet club in the country and its members dominated the national tournaments, many of which were played at United, as indeed were several MacRobertson Shield series of test matches.

It should perhaps be mentioned that, in those early days, the bowling greens and tennis courts were sometimes used as croquet lawns, and all the major national tournaments were held in Canterbury and indeed, at United. Perhaps it was 'home advantage'

that gave United's players their dominance. Indeed the tennis courts were where the croquet lawns are now, and visible reminders of this ancestry can be seen when the lawns are dry, in the outlines of where the tennis net posts used to be. Their concrete support blocks - about 400 mm in cross section and about a metre deep - lie only 20-30 mm below the surface.

In 1911, Croquet players were paying to be coached and Mr Stanley Wynne Jamieson, then secretary of the United Club, asked the Registrar if this broke the rule about the sport being non-professional. It did not, but no record exists of the fees that were charged. It was in this year, too, that yet another set of rules was submitted to the Registrar who approved them subject to the word 'Incorporated' being added to the club name, for by this time Friendly Societies had been superseded by Incorporated Societies, under the 1908 Act, which is still in force today, over 90 years later, albeit with several amendments.

By 1916 the croquet section was in serious financial straits. The accounts showed an overdraft at the National Bank of £204.2.3 together with a debt of £535.0.0 to Mr A E G Rhodes, and debentures of £571 about which Mr P A Laurel the secretary-treasurer wrote "on which so far we have paid no interest". He added that the assets were "no more than £150.0.0". In 1920, more rule changes were in the air, and leaping ahead to 1944, yet more rule changes were approved, this time giving members of each section the right to vote in other sections, on giving written notice they wished to do so.

Two events worthy of note occurred at United around this era. First, Croquet World, in March 1953 recalled of Mrs A E Smith, who must have been a woman of some determination, who also loved her sport: "One did not hear the groans of anguish over playing late into the evenings in those days, either." On one occasion in the 1920s Mrs Smith, of Christchurch, played three best-of-three matches in the one day, one going to three games, to win the Canterbury Ladies'

Championship. To accomplish this, she started at 8.45 am and finished just after 8.15 pm, after which she bicycled home, a matter of two miles."

The second was in 1928, when the English international player, Miss D D Steel, visited New Zealand. She queried the dimensions of the two courts in front of the United pavilion, on one of which she was about to play. When measured they were both found to be one yard short, 34 yards instead of the regulation 35 yards. This was the same Miss Steel who would invite the most junior male member of her club to partner her in mixed doubles matches, saying, "You will do as I say won't you?" Arriving at the court the young man was told to play his ball onto the lawn and then "go and sit down over there". Miss Steel would then use all the bisques and peel her partner's ball through all the hoops! It was this ability that led to the limit of four peeled hoops in handicap doubles that still applies today.

Regarding wrong-sized courts, a similar mistake was discovered during the 1969 MacRobertson Shield test match series in Melbourne. Tom Howat, of Australia, interrupted his opponent, John Prince, now a member of United and who was just about to start his first break, because he thought the court was too short. He, too, was proved correct and the court had to be reset and the game restarted. Fortunately, the interruption did not prevent John getting away first on resumption.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, in 1958 the Bowls section tried to get the club de-registered because there was a rule requiring a two-thirds majority to decide how to dispose of the assets in the event of dissolution, not a simple majority. The Bowling section had the latter but not the former. The Registrar agreed and de-registered the club. But Mr B M Stedman then the president of the whole United Club (and still in 2005, aged in his mid-80s, an active tennis player and a dedicated advisor on the care and maintenance of the lawns) objected. The Registrar agreed with his objection on

22nd December 1958 and reinstated the club. But on 18th August, 1959 Mr L B Hasell was appointed liquidator of the club, which went into voluntary liquidation on 9th April 1960. It obviously rose again.

The Christchurch office of the New Zealand Archives reveal that the Croquet Section was in funds to the tune of £11.11.11 (say \$35 at most in 2005) at the end of the 1956 season, during which - on 4th February - it had celebrated its 50th birthday, although it had also celebrated Anniversary Day on the preceding 16th December. In that season, no fewer than fifteen club championships were held, and two sets of balls bought for £14.7.2, a figure to be compared with today's cost of some \$800 for two sets.

As a somewhat tangential comment, the September 1986 edition of the Croquet Gazette contained this item:-

Married couples playing mixed doubles it seems it doesn't always work out as planned. In 1974 a paragraph appeared in the Dynamic Maturity magazine about a Connecticut couple, married for 33 years who obtained a separation at the husband's request. He explained to the judge presiding over the case that his wife's inability to play a ruthless and aggressive game prevented him ever winning any doubles games so he had to get rid of her and find himself a "tough new partner and begin to collect a few trophies"

Could the judge have been a keen croquet player too?

To return to our history. Once the pavilion was completed, there had to be a pavilion committee. There were two members from each section plus a non-voting secretary. This committee more or less ruled the roost, as a sort of umpire, because it had to approve the arrangements for the tournaments and social events for all three clubs,

since obviously it was best to avoid them all wanting to use the pavilion at the same time. It would have been most unusual for it to have had to exercise its authority in such matters, as the three sections were invariably able to reach amicable arrangements among themselves.

Even so, it was a most important committee, and to the Croquet section's credit a member was its secretary for many years. In what the Croquet Gazette headlined "Double the Honour" it reported: "Not often are a husband and wife honoured with life memberships at the same time and by the same club. Yet such has been the happy experience of Iris and Ernie Horwood" when they were elected life members of United. Iris was the Pavilion Committee's influential secretary for sixteen years, during which time the fire totally destroyed, or ruined many records and much equipment. This mammoth stint was mostly in tandem with her twenty years on United Croquet's Committee. Her late husband, Ernie, was also a stalwart of the club who not only served on the committee, but also did so much to give United Croquet the quality club of today and helped to clear up after the pavilion burnt down in 1979, a most unfortunate event which did however lead to the setting up of the three separate clubs we have today. Ernie also helped to modernise our watering system, and, his wife recalls, often "made tea" when she was attending to her secretarial duties.

Before the fire there was a water pipe under the golf course from Kilmarnock Street. After the fire, water for the lawns was brought up from the River Avon by an old pump system. (but, fortunately our drinking water came from a well in our car park). That there was a need to improve the watering system was undoubted. How it was done is described in the following extract from the Croquet Gazette of April 1990, penned by John Honoré then President of the Canterbury Croquet Association. He wrote:-

"When it became official, in mid-1988, that the United club's bid

to stage the third test had been successful, the preparation started. The good will and complete support of the club towards the project was demonstrated in an astonishing way. Over \$6,000 was pledged at one general meeting and the dream of a computer-controlled underground watering system for six full-sized lawns became a reality.

The winter of 1989 was spent agonising over the state of the grounds. Trenches criss-crossed the whole complex. Unbeknown to most players there is now a pop-up sprinkler close to the peg on all six lawns. Ray Forsyth, a neighbouring bowler, who was in charge of the installation was calmly confident that all would be well by Spring. He was right. United Croquet thanked him warmly and breathed a sigh of relief.

By now the city council had installed a new pipeline and a meter, of course. Ernie, working closely with the late Ray Forsyth and others, was one of the working party who used a small digger, and spent many hours, to put in the watering system that remains in use today.

But, at \$1,500 a season, the cost of water was a major burden on the club's finances. So in 1990 the club president, Tony Reid, persuaded the council that croquet was a deserving cause, and got them to reduce the charges significantly. His efforts capped and complemented all the work Ernie and so many others had put in, enabling us to afford to make our lawns the envy of many other clubs.

Is that all Ernie did for us? Not by a long chalk. He worked tirelessly amid the ruins of the burnt out pavilion, along with Jack McNab, Roger Murfitt and others, clearing the site and rescuing as much memorabilia as possible. We should acknowledge too, the support received from the bowls and tennis clubs in the initial stages of this salvage operation. Ernie also worked to build and repair the shelters and generally do the never-ending, ongoing maintenance of

the club and its equipment. He built an early equipment shed, mainly from corrugated iron sheets salvaged from the ground-floor ruins of what were the shower facilities of the pavilion. That he made a good job of it is amply shown by the fact that it was not finally abandoned until 1999, although it had been superseded as the primary storage for the hoops and balls etc by the present day equipment shed kindly donated by Mr Hadfield, the son of Mrs Maud Hadfield who was a member of the United Croquet Section many years previously.

So, it is very fitting that both The Horwoods, as they are affectionately known, should have been elected Honorary Members of our club and that Iris be asked to run the first hoop on Opening Day. Finally, we all should recognise that they are a model on which we should build our own contributions to the club – we too ought to be such willing and tireless workers.

Nor should the outstanding work of Bill Malloch, our greenkeeper for more than the past quarter of a century be overlooked. Tennis and croquet have shared green keepers for a very long time, but bowls have always had their own man. The bowling greens do not have the same type of surface as either the tennis or croquet courts – nor indeed are these two identical. Tennis courts need to be able to withstand running feet and bouncing balls and perfect flatness, while no doubt desirable, is not absolutely essential, given the ability of players to spin the ball. But croquet lawns must be uniformly flat (or at least as flat as possible) over a very large area. However, they do not get the wear and tear tennis courts do, except within the hoops. But, while grasses with different characteristics are needed, they are similar enough to allow one green keeper to be knowledgeable about both.

Under the watchful eye of Brian Stedman, Bill Malloch, whom Croquet ‘borrow’ from the tennis club, has served us well, mowing and marking diligently, and coming in very early in the morning when major tournaments are being held. For the MacRobertson

Shield series of test matches in 2000, we needed seven lawns and the tennis club most kindly allowed the creation of a seventh lawn on two of their courts. Although play started at 9 am Bill cut the seven lawns every second day and also marked them out on the intermediate days for the three weeks of the series. In the days before our plumbed-in watering system, he would also put out the sprinklers. Of course the watering took place in the daytime - no doubt to the annoyance of some members - but at tournament times Roger Murfitt would come down late in the day, and sometimes at night, to shift them so as to water the whole playing area.

The trolleys we still use today were built in 1991 by Tony Reid, from a drawing from the Kelburn club in Wellington. Their cost of around \$100 each was met by various members whose names are recorded on the small plaques on the trolleys.

There have been quite a few notable events at United, once described in the Croquet Gazette as "a fitting scene for tournaments and test matches". The Gazette article continued: "Anyone who wants a rest from croquet can feed the ducks, or stroll under the great trees, or take a smorgasbord lunch in the park café. One of the notable events was the first use of British championship hoops with only one thirty-second of an inch clearance on either side of the ball. (The writer should perhaps have said on both sides of the ball.) This innovation occurred at the 1988 Men's Invitation held at United, and in a commentary on the tournament, Brian Priestley wrote: "Yet the players made 16 triple peels, and John Prince added a delayed sextuple to ice the cake". The winner, however was Paul Skinley with Graeme Roberts runner-up.

The details of the many club and other competitions held at United have been dimmed by time, although some remain engraved, literally, on our trophies. These include The Mendip Hills Challenge Cup presented by A W Rutherford in 1914; The Junior Challenge Cup presented by Mr G Murray-Ansley in 1921; The Hettie L Smith

Memorial Cup of 1925; The Challenge Cup presented by F A Dunn for C Grade players in 1940; the Men's handicap singles presented by Mrs L. Stockdale in 1955; and a cup for the Senior Levels (1/2 to 3 bisques) also presented in 1955.

More recently another competition has become firmly established in our fixtures' calendar, The Maud Trainor Tournament. Originally this was run as United's Veterans Tournament, open to all. In the early 1990s discussions were held with the Canterbury Croquet Association to see if the event should not be run by them, as it was, after all, an open fixture and not one limited to United members.

The CCA felt that since the club had been running it successfully for some years it should properly remain under the control of, and be managed by, United, though remain an open event. Shortly after this decision became known Mrs Billy Millar, the Club Captain, was approached by Mrs Maud Trainor with the idea that if the tournament were named after her, she would donate a lump sum to the club to finance the prizes.

Maud's late husband, Eric, was a highly competitive and successful member of United in the middle years of the twentieth century. He was selected to represent the South Island in a match against Australia in 1963. Billy Millar and the many Club members she consulted all agreed it would be "right and proper" for the name of the event to be changed, and indeed an honour to the club. So now the question arose of just what size the lump sum should be to cover the long term future costs of the prizes.

But first Maud insisted that the prizes should not be cups. "We are all fed up with cleaning the blessed things", she said. And she continued, "They should be edible". And so they have remained, although "edible" has been stretched a bit occasionally to include "drinkable", but definitely never "cleanable"!

To return to our arithmetic. The calculation for the lump sum involved assuming a rate of inflation and a rate of interest that might reasonably be expected from a bank deposit account. These two rates cancelled each other out, more or less. The same rate was used to discount to today's value the future stream of the costs of prizes, and Maud most generously then donated that sum to the club. It has been separately accounted for ever since.

Part of the agreement is that United will make up any shortfall in the money available for the prizes, but to date this clause has never been invoked. Another clause states that Maud, or a relative of hers, shall present the prizes at the end of the week-long competition, and apart from one year when she was abroad, Maud has always done so. She has also usually played in the event which is limited to players aged 65 years or over on the Monday the tournament starts.

It has proved a very popular event indeed, and in some years the house full notice has had to be issued. With its six lawns, and double banking the norm, there can be twelve sides in each of the singles and the doubles events and over the eleven years since 'The Maud' was set up this number, or very nearly, has been reached regularly.

A feature of the event is the very generous allowances made for refreshment breaks. About an hour or so after play starts those playing the first colour balls are summoned to their morning tea break. This takes twenty minutes or so, with the club providing both the drinks and the muffins etc. Then in come the second colours, to more drinks and muffins and so on. But everyone comes into lunch at the same time. Afternoon tea is a similarly leisurely staggered affair, to acknowledge that, as Maud said originally, "Many of the players won't have seen each other for months and would enjoy a good old chin wag" And so it has proved. The prizes are regarded as secondary to the enjoyment of a hassle-free event – and because of its essentially social nature the tournament is outside the handicapping system. Even the dreaded Automatic Handicapping System of today does not apply.

Another innovation came from the Sportsfest NZ '91 initiative by the City Council. United was asked to help host some of the 2,000 Japanese who would be visiting Christchurch in October. Later it transpired that the game they wanted to play was not croquet but Gateball. Fortunately, a rulebook arrived ahead of the main party, with a small delegation from the Japan Gateball Union. So, armed with a new vocabulary - touch, not roquet, spark, not croquet, and a revived technique of placing your foot on your ball when sparking (footing went out of Association croquet in the 1860s) and using hoops about twice as wide as usual - battle was joined. We lost.

United has been honoured by having some outstanding players as members. Mention has already been made of the father and son Ross family in the club's early days. Not only were they outstanding players, but both went on to become leaders of the New Zealand Croquet Council. In 1920 Mr E J Ross, who was a tennis player but joined the croquet fraternity shortly after World War One, became the first NZCC President, and Mr A G F Ross succeeded him in 1928. In 1986, these pioneers were followed by Mr. Roger Murfitt, who held this demanding position for six years.

Many United players have been highly successful in competitive play, and among these A.G.F. Ross certainly earns a mention, John Prince recalls. "He was the game's leading exponent in this country for many years and was the youngest son of E J Ross, the founder-secretary of the United Club. Many of the Ross family were members at United, E J was a bowler and probably the boys played tennis, with Arthur taking an interest in croquet as well. The two older Ross brothers died in action during the war, and Arthur was gassed at Ypres. Whilst convalescing he perfected his croquet technique, which was built around a fluent style. At his best he could play a big split shot stopping each ball on a five pound note." He won the New Zealand Open Championship Singles 11 times, and was captain of the 1950-51 New Zealand team, when the Kiwis first won the

MacRobertson Shield, croquet's topmost international competition.

Other croquet members who were in the same league were H C Ford, J W McNab, Mr and Mrs W H Kirk, and Mesdames E A Smith and W L Martin. They were a formidable force in New Zealand croquet. Today's players continue that tradition. Among those who are, or who have been, members of United and have represented New Zealand in international tournaments, many on more than one occasion, or who have won national titles are, in alphabetical order, G W Beale, Miss J McIntyre, R J Murfitt, Mrs P Norton, P Parkinson, J G Prince, P J Skinley and Mrs M Thompson. Many others have won regional titles and many former members have also 'brought home the bacon' at national or regional levels in both championship and handicap tournaments.

Graham Beale began his croquet at the Cashmere Club around 1980 and the honours boards there reveal his rapid progress through the grades. He joined United in the mid-1980s, played consistently well and was selected as captain of the New Zealand MacRobertson team that played at Echuca in Australia in 1993. More recently he has been a leading figure in developing and running a coaching programme for the topmost players.

Jane McIntyre also started her croquet career as a young player when she joined United in 1989. Her ranking in the world rose steadily, to reach the women's No.2 spot in 1997, when she was also the leading woman player in New Zealand. Her accountancy studies occasionally took precedence over croquet, but she has still found time to play in three Trans-Tasman tests, the World Championships (held in Australia 1997) and to win the New Zealand Women's Championship and Canterbury Open twice. She has also served United well, as secretary and treasurer.

Roger Murfitt first played at the Hornby Club, making a speedy exit from C Grade. He joined United in 1972. His lengthy spell as NZCC President did not prevent him from being involved in six

MacRobertson teams, once as manager. He appears on the New Zealand Honours board on numerous occasions for a dozen or so years from the 1970s.

Peggy Norton has proved to be an outstanding lady player. Elmwood Club saw the start of her involvement with what she calls, 'this lovely game'. Among the honours she has achieved are the New Zealand Women's Championship and the New Zealand Women's Handicap Championships in 2002, as well as winning numerous Canterbury Championships.

Peter Parkinson arrived relatively late on the croquet scene, starting to play at the Rangiora Club. He has developed a highly successful style of play which has earned him a place on the top step of the winners' podium on several occasions. He was selected to play in the New Zealand team for the MacRobertson played in 2004 in Florida.

John Prince has scaled the highest peaks in the croquet world. Still under seventeen years of age he played in the first of - so far - nine MacRobertson Shield Test Matches. He has won eight New Zealand Open titles and has ten New Zealand Men's Championships, among his many other successes. In 1996 he became an Honorary Life Member of the Croquet Association (England) and in 2000 received the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to Croquet. That year he was elected to Life Membership of Croquet New Zealand, the Canterbury Croquet Association and the United Croquet Club.

Paul Skinley began his playing days at the Rangitata Club in Dannevirke. Widely renowned for his stylish play, he too, has left his mark on the New Zealand Honours Board since 1974, his successes including winning the inaugural Arthur Ross Handicap Tournament in 1979. He has represented New Zealand more than a dozen times, including three MacRobertson tests. He now plays at

the Wellington Club.

Marie Thompson has been playing for many years, and has won well in excess of thirty events, including notable wins in four national tournaments, starting with the New Zealand Junior Doubles a quarter of a century ago. Marie won the President's Invitation just three years later, and went on to win the South Island Women's championship and the New Zealand Mixed doubles championship in 2002. Marie has seen many changes in croquet as well as at United, and reckons croquet is "the most wonderful game ever".

In more recent times four teenagers have made a real impact at United. While originally, and still, a member of the Cashmere Croquet Club, Paddy Chapman has already reached deep into the highest ranks of players with, at the time of writing, a handicap of minus two. He has been coached by John Prince and has proved to be an exceptionally quick learner.

A J Reid journeyed south from the Wairarapa with a handicap of 1.5, shortly before the start of the 2004-2005 season. AJ - as he is universally known - hits the ball very straight and very hard, indeed it is not unknown for his ball to end up not just on the next lawn but on the next lawn but one. He, too, is now a minus 2 player and a very welcome influence on us all.

Jacob Farmer began to play at Barrington Park. In the eighteen months or so he has been at United his handicap has taken a rapid and considerable dive, from 9 to just 3, moving him into Division One in Canterbury's new system of grades.

The fourth of this group of youngsters is Seth Bennett, another of the products of the Barrington Park Croquet Club's youth development programme. He is playing well and there is a general feeling that his developing skills are likely soon to be reflected in a lowering of his handicap.

Coming right up to date, the clubrooms were extended and refurbished in 2002 and the outside terrace and sails completed by the middle of 2003. Signs naming the club and inviting passers by to come and 'Try Croquet' were installed at the end of 2004.

Earlier reference was made to the major role United members have played in New Zealand croquet. It would not be appropriate to list here all their international appearances and national titles, which are recorded elsewhere. But they have earned the right to have their achievements noted. A cursory count from the New Zealand Croquet Council honours board reveals over 200 entries, from the early 20th into the 21st century. Notable were the dozen or so early international appearances by A G F Ross, and the three dozen or more by current members, particularly Roger Murfitt, John Prince and Jane McIntyre. The number of victories in national tournaments is well over one hundred, from the New Zealand Open Championship to the Junior Doubles – junior in playing grade, not age. It is to be hoped that this long sequence of successes will be continued for another century, at least.

Pages 74 to 125 are not included in this document.

6. United Tennis Club/Hagley Park Tennis Club

7. United Bowling Club

8. United Women's Bowling Club 1943-1997

9. The Classic Pairs: 1984-1996

References

PART ONE

1. CHRISTCHURCH'S EARLY YEARS The Garden City In the Making

- 1 Page 16 of *Riccarton. The Founding Borough* by Ian McBride. (Copyright Riccarton/Wigram Community Board 1994)
- 2 Page 2 *Outline History of Hagley Park* by Ian McBride
- 3 Page 65 *The Story of Christchurch* by Henry Wigram published in 1916.
- 4 Page 13 *The Evolution of a City* published by Christchurch City Council, 1916
- 5 Page 39 *The Early Days of Canterbury* by A Bruce.
- 6 Page 51 of *The Evolution of a City*
- 7 *ibid* Page 61
- 8 *Ibid* Page 132
- 9 Page 117 *The Illustrated Guide to Christchurch and Neighbourhood* by M Mosley published in 1885
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- 11 Page 227 *The Story of Christchurch.*

2. UNITED'S RISE AT PILGRIMS' CORNER: A Pretty Feature of the Park

- 1 Page 47 Vol 1 *The Christchurch Domains Board Minutes*
- 2 *Ibid* Page 425
- 3 *Ibid* Page 426
- 4 *Ibid* Page 42
- 5 *Ibid* Page 430
- 6 *An Outline History of Hagley Park* in the City Library
- 7 Page 432 Volume 1 of *The Christchurch Domains Board Minutes*
- 8 *Ibid* page 434
- 9 *Ibid* Page 437
- 10 *Ibid* Page 440
- 11 *Ibid* Page 461
- 12 Page 37 of the *CDB Minutes for 1912-1916*

13 Ibid Page 38

14 Ibid Page 50

15 Reference is made to these in the National Archives in Accession
670 Location H3 17

PART TWO

3 UNITED BOWLING CLUB

Pilgrims Corner. When the Mayor of Christchurch opened the United Bowling, Tennis and Croquet Club's pavilion, in 1905, he referred (according to The Press) to Pilgrims' Corner "to the good old days of fifty years or more ago Just where the pavilion stands – passengers by the 'first four ships' – had made their camping ground. The first whare, erected by Mrs C Hood-Williams, was stationed in the vicinity, and V-shaped huts, occupied by Mr Phillips and Mr (now the Hon.) C C Bowen, were scattered around about. The first races were held on the plot in '50 or '52."

1 Press 28.5.1906

2 Press 16.1.1907

3 Press 29.8.1907

4 ibid

5 Press 30.9.1911

6 Press 14.2.1913

7 ibid

8 Press 2.6.1913

9 Evening News 25.4.1915

10 Press 24.6.1914

11 Press 16.6.1915

Appendix

PART ONE

1. CHRISTCHURCH'S EARLY YEARS

The Garden City In the Making

The newly appointed members of the Christchurch Domain Board who held their first meeting on 13th February 1905: Appointed by the His Excellency the Governor :

Henry George Ell (M.H.R), Thomas Henry Davy (M.H.R), George Witty (M.H.R), Frederick Wallaston Hutton.

Appointed by the Christchurch City Council : Henry Joseph Beswick,

Walter Henry Cooper, Bethel Prin Manhire, The Mayor of Christchurch.

Appointed by the Selwyn County Council : George Scott, William McMillan, Hugh Percy Murray-Aynsley, The Chairman of the Selwyn County Council.

Appointed by the Riccarton Road Board : Samuel Albert Staples.

Note: M.H.R is Member of the House of Representatives, now M.P.

Illustrations

Front cover: Painting by Edna Bruce b.1897; may have been painted when she was a student at the School of Art during World War One. The original hangs in the Hagley Park Tennis Club Brian Stedman Pavilion.

Our thanks to Neil Roberts, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu for information about Edna Bruce.

Page 56: United Tennis courts in early years. From the Canterbury Museum's W Robinson Collection. Ref.1991.344.5

Back cover: Photograph of the United pavilion after World War Two, when it was still in reasonable condition.

Acknowledgements

Tennis

Material for this short history of the Hagley Park Tennis Club (formerly the United Tennis Club) was drawn from a variety of sources including interviews with long-standing club members, club records and Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association records held in the Canterbury Museum. Photographs from the Canterbury Museum collection have also been used. The centenary history of the Canterbury Lawn Tennis Association, and *Centrecourt: A Century of New Zealand Tennis* by Paul Elenio were also very helpful. I am very grateful to those who took the time to help and apologetic to those whose contributions to the club have been inadvertently overlooked.

Andrew Moffat

Croquet

Thanks must be given for the advice from many colleagues, especially Iris Horwood and John Prince. The outstanding helpfulness of the staff at the Christchurch branch of the National Archives is also gratefully recognised.

Geoffrey Naylor

Bowling and Editing

My thanks to the Bowling club centenary committee for gentle guidance, especially Joan and Richard Haythornthwaite. Particular thanks also to members of the Christchurch Bowling Club who put up with my comings and goings in researching from their early newspaper clippings books.

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Finally to Geoffrey Naylor for his avuncular, persistent directing of the project. His knowledge and incisive judgement were invaluable.

Peter J Oakes

UNITED CROQUET CLUB OFFICIALS

(Years are at start of season)

	President	Secretary	Captain
1925	W Tyres	E J Ross	
1926	E J Ross	A G R Ross	
1928	W Tyres	A G R Ross	
1929		Mrs Hindman	
1930	AGR Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1931	AGR Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1932	S McCullaugh	Mrs J Maddren	
1933	S McCullaugh	Mrs J Maddren	
1934	S McCullaugh	Mrs J Maddren	
1934	E J Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1935	E J Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1936	E J Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1937		Mrs J Maddren	
1938	E J Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1939	E J Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1940	A C Murray	Mrs J Maddren	
1941	A G R Ross	Mrs J Maddren	
1942	Lt Col W S Beamish	Mrs H A Penn	
1943	Mrs G Smithson	Mrs H A Penn	Mrs R Kellaway
1944	Mrs G Smithson	Mrs H A Penn	Mrs R Kellaway
1945	Mrs G Smithson	Mrs H A Penn	Mrs R Kellaway
1946	Mrs A S Clark	Mrs H A Penn	Mrs R Kellaway
1947	Mrs A S Clark	Mrs T B Grant	Mrs R Kellaway
1948	Mrs A S Clark	Mrs T B Grant	Mrs E McNish
1949	Mrs A S Clark	Mrs T B Grant	Committee
1950	Mrs A S Clark	Mrs T B Grant	Committee
1951	Mrs A S Clark	Mrs T B Grant	Mrs A Dunn
1952	Mrs J Maddren	Mrs T B Grant	Mrs A Dunn
1953	Mrs J Maddren	Mrs T B Grant	Mrs W Martin
1954	Mrs M McTeigue	Mrs T B Grant	Mrs W Martin
1955	Mrs M McTeigue	Mrs J Jones	Mrs W Martin
1956	Mrs E McNish	Mrs J Jones	Mrs T B Grant
1957	Mrs E McNish	Mrs E Burgess	Mrs T B Grant
1958	Mrs E McNish	Mrs E Burgess	Mrs B Reynolds
1959	Mrs M McTeigue	Mrs F Redman	Mrs B Reynolds
1960	Mrs M McTeigue	Mrs F Redman	Mrs W Martin
1961	Mrs M McTeigue	Mrs F Redman	Mrs W Martin
1962	Mrs D Robertson	Mrs W Barrow	Mrs M Whitcombe
1963	Mrs D Robertson	Mrs W Barrow	Mrs M Whitcombe
1964	Mrs D Robertson	Mrs D Parry	Mrs M Whitcombe
1965	Mrs F R Berryman	Mrs D Parry	Mrs W Barrow
1966	Mrs F R Berryman	Mrs D Parry	Mrs W Barrow

1983-84 R.D. Webster R.E. Webster
 1984-85 N.R. Pattinson S.E. Haig
 1985-86 N.R. Pattinson S.E. Haig
 1986-87 N.R. Pattinson S.E. Haig
 1987-88 N.R. Pattinson S.E. Haig
 1988-89 N.R. Pattinson S.E. Haig
 1989-90 M.G. Belcher P.K. Lewthwaite

 1990-91 A.A. Blunt M.A. Holland
 1991-92 N.R. Pattinson S. Haig
 1992-93 N.R. Pattinson S. Haig
 1993-94 R.D. Webster S. Haig
 1994-95 R.D. Webster S. Haig
 1997-98 B. Thomson L. Dick

1999-2000 B. Thomson L.A. Dick
 2000-01 D.R. Preston R.M. Preston
 2001-02 B.K. Thomson L. Dick
 2003-04 R.M. Preston T.J. Preston

Presidents

1959-82 B.M. Stedman
 1982-85 L.V. North
 1985-89 P.A. Syme
 1989-95 D.R. Preston
 1995-98 P.K. Lewthwaite
 1998-2005 B.P. Day